

A Companion to Ancient Thrace

**Valeva, Julia; Nankov, Emil;
Graninger, Denver**

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**ANCIENT
THRACE**

EDITED BY
JULIA VALEVA, EMIL NANKOV,
AND DENVER GRANINGER



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Cover image: Apollo (?) on a chariot drawn by winged horses, detail from a jug from the Rogozen hoard, 4th century BC. Regional Museum of History, Vratsa, Bulgaria / photo by

Editors' Preface

Beyond the Thracian gold of itinerant museum exhibitions, the Thracian horses of Rhesos, and the wondrous Thracian logos in Herodotus' *Histories*, Thrace remains marginal in Western scholarship, often open only to the sustained inquiry of a narrow group of specialists. But new discoveries achieved by intensified archaeological fieldwork and extensive application of remote sensing techniques and interdisciplinary methods, coupled with recent shifts within the modern historiography of the ancient world, have made a reappraisal of ancient Thrace desirable and necessary. *A Companion to Ancient Thrace* is an acknowledgement of the newly recognized complexity of the social and cultural phenomena of the Balkan periphery of the Classical world and responds to a need to make those phenomena more accessible to a broader scholarly audience.

The *Companion* provides an opportunity to move beyond prevailing Athenocentric and Romanocentric narratives and to appreciate Thrace both as home to unique and uniquely influential cultures, and as an important zone of contact and major player in Aegean, Mediterranean, and indeed Eurasian politics throughout antiquity. Archaeology plays a central role in this presentation, and many chapters provide up-to-date syntheses of available material evidence for the first time. Such evidence is incorporated in the Thracian histories and historiographies offered in the *Companion*, and implicated in discussion of fundamental problems in current scholarship on Thrace – some recent (e.g., urbanization, trade), others more traditional (e.g., religion). Although the collection of essays focuses on the Classical and Hellenistic periods, individual chapters look beyond these chronological limits and consider problems of continuity and discontinuity with the preceding Early Iron Age and the succeeding Roman Imperial period. By bringing Thrace into dialogue with other regions in southeastern Europe, the eastern Mediterranean, and beyond, the *Companion* will ultimately allow for new sets of questions to begin to be posed of the region as a whole.

Bulgarian names and publications have been transliterated from Cyrillic into Latin characters generally in accordance with the Library of Congress Romanization Table for Bulgarian (<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/romanization/bulgarian.pdf>), although there is some unavoidable variation between chapters.

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Abbreviations

AE =

Année épigraphique

Agora 15 =

B. D. Meritt and J. S. Traill. 1974. *Inscriptions: The Athenian Councillors* (The Athenian Agora 15). Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

Agora 19 =

Gerald V. Lalonde, Merle K. Langdon, and Michael B. Walbank. 1991. *Inscriptions: Horoi, Poletai Records, Leases of Public Lands* (The Athenian Agora 19). Princeton, NJ: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

AJA =

American Journal of Archaeology

ANRW =

Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt

AR =

argentum, silver

ArchBulg =

Archaeologia Bulgarica

AV =

aurum, gold

BCH =

Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique

BE =

Bulletin épigraphique of the Revue des Études Grecques

Bi =

billon, alloy (debased silver)

CAH =

Cambridge Ancient History

CCCHBulg =

Ilya Prokopov, Filipova Svetoslava, and Evgeni Paunov, eds. 2007–. *Coin Collections and Coin Hoards in Bulgaria*. Sofia: Provias.

CH =

Coin Hoards, vols. 1–9. London: Royal Numismatic Society, 1975–2002; vol. 10, New York and London: American Numismatic Society / Royal Numismatic Society, 2010.

CIL =
Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum

CIRB =
Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosporani

FD III =
Fouilles de Delphes. III. Épigraphie. 1909–1985. Athens and Paris: École Française d'Athènes / De Boccard.

FGrHist =
Felix Jacoby, ed. 1957. Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker. Leiden: Brill.

IG =
Inscriptiones Graecae

IGBulg =
Georgi Mihailov, ed. 1958–1997. Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae. 5 vols. Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

IGCH =
Margaret Thompson, Otto Mørkholm, and Colin M. Kraay, eds. 1973. An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards. New York: American Numismatic Society.

IGR =
René Cagnat et al., eds. 1901. Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes, vol. 1. Paris: Ernest Leroux.

ILBulg =
Boris Gerov, ed. 1989. Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae [inter fluvios Oescum et Iatrum]. Sofia.

ILS =
H. Dessau, ed. 1892–1916. Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, vols. I–III. Berlin: Weidmann.

ISM =
Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et Latinae. Inscriptiile din Scythia Minor grecești și latine, I–III, V. Bucharest, 1983–1999.

IThrAeg =
L. Loukopoulou, M.-G. Parissaki, S. Psoma, and A. Zournatzi, eds. 2005. Ἐπιγραφὲς τῆς Θράκης τοῦ 00391ἰγαίου μεταξὺ τῶν ποταμῶν 0039Δέστου καὶ Ἑβρου (0039Δομοὶ Ξάνθης, Ῥοδόπης καὶ Ἑβρου). Inscriptiones antiquae partis Thraciae quae ad ora maris Aegaei sita est (praefecturae Xanthes, Rhodopes et Hebri). Athens and Paris: Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity / De Boccard.

LGPN IV =
Peter M. Fraser, Elaine Matthews, and Richard W. V. Catling. 2005. A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names, vol. IV (Macedonia, Thrace, Northern

Regions of the Black Sea). Oxford: Clarendon Press.

RAC =

Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum

RE =

Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft

RPC =

Andrew Burnett, Michel Amandry, and Pere Pau Ripollès, eds. 1992.

Roman Provincial Coinage, vol. I: From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC–AD 69). London and Paris: British Museum Press / Bibliothèque Nationale.

RRGB I–II =

Rumen Ivanov, ed. 2002–2003. Rimski i rannovizantiyski gradove v Bulgaria, vols. I–II. Sofia: Ivray.

SEG =

Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum

SIG =

Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum

SNG =

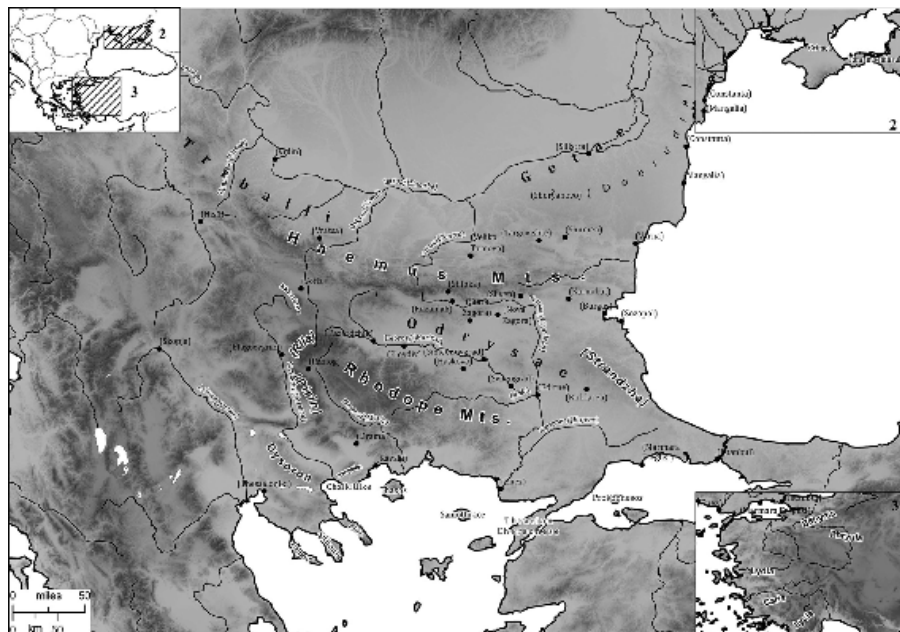
Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum

t.p.q. =

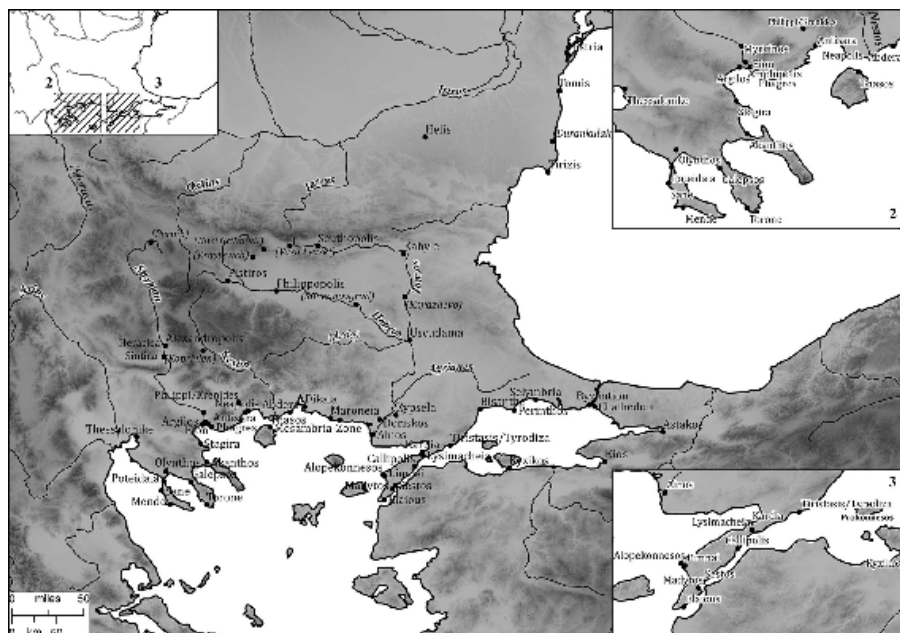
terminus post quem

ZPE =

Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik

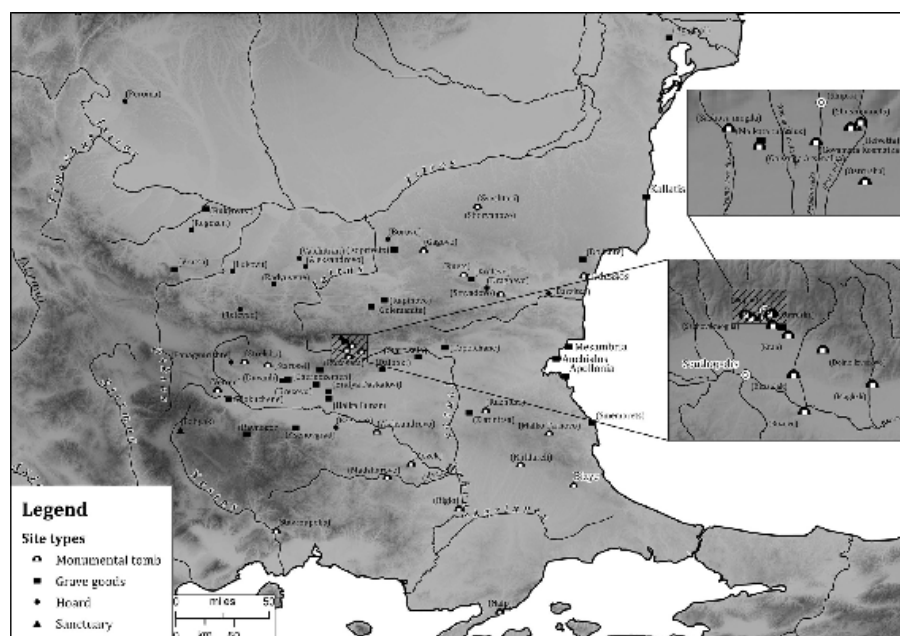


Map 1 General reference map for Ancient Thrace: geography, main ethnē, neighbors (modern place names in parentheses). Author: Julia Tzvetkova.



Map 2 Ancient Thrace: pre-Roman settlements (modern place names in

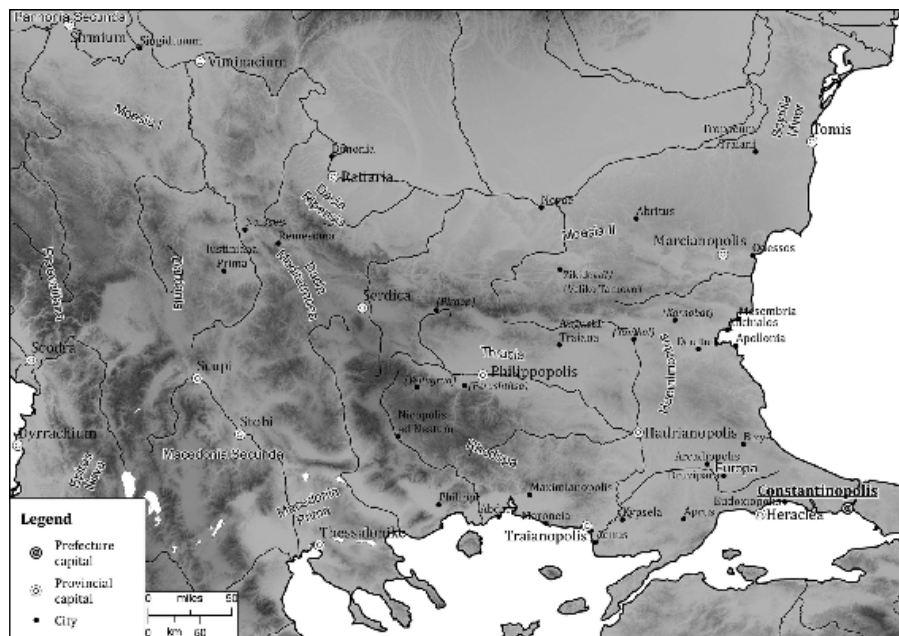
parentheses). Author: Julia Tzvetkova.



Map 3 Ancient Thrace: monumental tombs, grave goods and hoards (modern place names in parentheses). Author: Julia Tzvetkova.



Map 4 Roman Thrace. Author: Julia Tzvetkova.



Map 5 Thrace in Late Antiquity (modern place names in parentheses). Author: Julia Tzvetkova.

Part I
Thrace and Thracians

Chapter 1

An Introduction to Studying Ancient Thrace

Nikola Theodossiev

Ancient Thrace, located beyond the northern periphery of the Greek world, was an extensive region that occupied part of southeastern Europe during the late second and first millennia BCE, before it was gradually conquered by the Roman Empire in the period from the third decade of the first century BCE to the beginning of the second century CE. Subsequently, the Roman provinces of Thracia, Moesia, and Dacia were set up in Thrace and a powerful process of Romanization unified most of the previous diversity. Due to intensive political developments, accompanied by powerful changes in ethnic landscapes and complex cultural interactions, the frontiers of Thrace were dynamic, flexible, and approximate (Fol and Spiridonov 1983).

The ancient Thracians were non-literary people and, except for some inscriptions in Greek from the Classical and Hellenistic periods or in Thracian language but with Greek letters, no domestic historical sources are known to have existed. The earliest foreign records that may refer to ancient Thrace are several Linear B texts, supposedly testifying to contacts between Mycenaean Greeks and Thracians that presumably occurred over the second half of the second millennium BCE. The earliest close communication and bilateral interaction between Greeks and Thracians, however, were related to Greek colonization in Thrace that began in the middle of the eighth century BCE and continued for several centuries. The Greek colonization caused the gradual Hellenization of the Thracian aristocracy and certain tribes, and was accompanied by intensive and complex multilateral interrelations (Theodossiev 2011a).

An interesting early example of very close contacts, joint state-community, and intensive interaction between Greeks and Thracians, well attested in the historical sources, is furnished by the political activities of the Athenian aristocrat Miltiades the Elder, from the family of the Philaidai, who was a potential rival of the tyrant Peisistratos. In ca. 560 BCE, following the request of the Thracian Dolonkoi who were looking for an ally against the neighboring Apsyntioi, Miltiades the Elder founded a colony in the Thracian Chersonesos, became a tyrant of both the Athenian colonists and Dolonkoi, and built a fortification wall across the peninsula. Miltiades died childless and was succeeded as tyrant by Stesagoras, the son of his half-brother Kimon the Elder. In ca. 524 BCE Stesagoras was assassinated during a war against Lampsakos and the rule was transferred to his brother, Miltiades the Younger,

who was sent to protect Athenian interests in the region. The younger Miltiades concluded a dynastic marriage in ca. 515 BCE with Hegesipyle, the daughter of the Thracian king Oloros, and thus reinforced the alliance between the Athenian colonists and the local Thracians. Hegesipyle would give birth to Kimon, the famous Athenian politician and outstanding strategos, ca. 510 BCE. Miltiades the Younger ruled the Thracian Chersonesos until it was occupied by the Persians in 493 BCE, when he fled to Athens and later served as one of the ten Athenian strategoi in the decisive battle of Marathon in 490 BCE (Loukopoulou 1989).

While many ancient Greek authors, like Herodotus among others, provided various secondhand accounts on Thrace, Thucydides, due to his family origins, was the first Greek historian who lived in the region, maintained close relations with Thracian nobles, and acquired a profound knowledge of local realities. Thucydides was a great-grandson of Miltiades the Younger and a great-great grandson of the Thracian king Oloros. Thucydides' father even bore a Thracian name unique for Athens: Oloros, evidently named after Hegesipyle's father. Thucydides possessed family gold mines at Skapte Hyle in Thrace and, during the Peloponnesian War, he was sent as an Athenian strategos to Thasos in 424/423 BCE, because he was well familiar with the Thracians. Thucydides failed to save the strategically important Athenian colony Amphipolis from the invasion of the Spartan strategos Brasidas, however, and was forced to spend the next 20 years, until 404 BCE, in exile, probably living on his family estate in Thrace and devoting his time to historical studies (Cartwright 1997).

Another Greek historian, philosopher, and soldier, who had significant personal experiences in Thrace and gave valuable accounts, was Xenophon. After the Peloponnesian War, Xenophon left Athens and joined a Greek army of mercenaries hired by the Achaemenid prince Cyrus the Younger, who rebelled against his brother Artaxerxes II, the king of Persia. After the defeat of Cyrus at Cunaxa in 401 BCE, the Greek mercenaries, known as the Ten Thousand, returned by marching through Mesopotamia, Armenia, and northern Anatolia. In the winter of 400/399 BCE, the Greek mercenaries were employed by the Thracian paradynastos Seuthes II. They carried out combat operations and helped Seuthes to restore his political control over certain territories and Thracian tribes. Simultaneously, the Greeks were engaged in various other activities in Thrace. Xenophon participated in these events and directly observed the bilateral communication and close interaction between Greeks and Thracians. He left notable descriptions of not only Thracian political history, but also the royal court, social structure, military tactics, and everyday life. Due to his detailed and valuable firsthand accounts of various events and experiences, Xenophon could be considered the first foreign historian who personally explored and described ancient Thrace (Stronk 1995).

In modern times, during more than a century of intensive and rapidly developing research on Classical antiquity, Western scholars rarely studied ancient Thrace, which was usually considered as a peripheral region, related to the protohistoric European Iron Age and partly influenced by ancient Greek civilization. Many readers would be surprised to learn, however, that the first occasional excavations and archaeological explorations in Thrace date to the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, long before the study of the Classical world became an actual academic discipline, distinct from early modern European antiquarianism. The earliest evidence was produced by Reinhold Lubenau, a German pharmacist and traveler who described his travels from 1573 to 1589 in a manuscript completed in 1628, but not published until 1914–1915. There one may find brief reference to an excavation of a Thracian tumulus located near Philippopolis conducted by Jacques de Germigny in 1584; de Germigny, the French Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, excavated with Ottoman approval and discovered human bones and weapons, which were sent to King Henry III of France (Lubenau 1914, 108). Although Lubenau described some notable facts of the ancient history and topography of Thrace later in his manuscript, apparently following his antiquarian interests in the spirit of the Renaissance, he did not provide more information on this interesting archaeological discovery, the earliest known excavation of a Thracian site (Lubenau 1914, 108–112).

About one century later, in the turbulent historical period when the Ottoman Empire, already in possession of a significant part of continental Europe, was preparing to invade the Kingdom of Hungary, Count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, a young Italian naturalist and geographer, born in 1658 in a patrician family in Bologna, became an officer in the army of Venice. In 1679, just a few years before the decisive Battle of Vienna in 1683, he was sent on a mission representing Venice to Constantinople in order to examine Ottoman military forces. While the reconnaissance mission was successfully accomplished, Marsigli remained devoted to his scientific interests and explored natural history and the Roman antiquities spread throughout the Ottoman Empire during his travels in 1679 and 1680 (Dimitrov 1946–1947). He not only wrote detailed descriptions and prepared precise maps and informative prints, which showed ancient settlements and monuments along the lower Danube, but also discovered and identified the remains of Ulpia Oescus, one of the major Roman towns in the Province of Moesia Inferior. Most importantly, Marsigli excavated several tumuli located in the vicinity of Ulpia Oescus and provided informative drawings and descriptions of Thracian tumuli that were observed by him. This was a notable moment for the nascent interest in studying antiquities located in the territory of ancient Thrace and, in fact, these were the first ever recorded archaeological excavations of Thracian tumuli conducted by a scholar who published the results. After a long career in the army of the Habsburg Empire and intensive scientific studies, Marsigli finally returned to his native Bologna and founded in 1711

the Istituto delle Scienze ed Arti Liberali. He lived long enough to see his fundamental scholarly work on the Danube published in 1726 in The Hague and Amsterdam (Marsigli 1726).

The first modern, holistic study on ancient Thrace, however, was the book written by the French philologist and numismatist Félix Cary and published in 1752 (Cary 1752). The book presented the history of the Thracian kings, based on numismatic evidence and historical sources. Cary was born in 1699 in Marseille and received an excellent education in the humanities, thus both gaining a profound knowledge of and developing an active interest in ancient history and collections of antiquities. As a young scholar, he acquired a distinguished reputation among the intellectual circles of the Académie de Marseille and soon he was internationally recognized. Later in his life, in 1751, Cary was admitted to the Accademia Etrusca di Cortona and in 1752, the year when his notable book on the Thracian kings was published, he became a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, the most prestigious academy of France in the field of the humanities. Two years later, in 1754, Cary died, but up to the mid-nineteenth century his book remained the most comprehensive and important study of Thracian history. Due to his significant scholarly contribution, Cary is recognized as one of the founders of modern Thracian studies (Danov 1984).

Over the next century, European interest in the antiquities spread across the northern Balkan territories of the Ottoman Empire was steadily growing and many diplomats, army officers, scholars, and travelers left notable reports, while some occasional archaeological discoveries were reported. Thus, in 1851, a monumental Thracian beehive tomb with an intact rich burial dated to the second half of the fourth century BCE was accidentally unearthed during agricultural works carried out by local peasants on the periphery of a tumulus located near the village of Rozovets, or, according to another version of the story, during excavations to collect stones from the tumular embankment. Most of the precious grave goods were collected by Ottoman authorities and temporarily exhibited in Plovdiv. The spectacular archaeological find was immediately reported and described in the Bulgarian press; this was the first discovery of Thracian material in the north Balkans that instigated a wider public interest and awareness (Theodossiev 2005).

Simultaneously, a certain interest in studying ancient Thrace appeared among European academics in the middle of the nineteenth century. For example, Bernhard Giseke, a renowned German scholar in Classical studies, wrote a remarkable monograph exploring the Thracians and the Pelasgians and their interrelations, which was published in 1858 in Leipzig (Giseke 1858). Ten years later, in 1868, at the beginning of his career, Albert Dumont, a leading French scholar in archaeology and art history and an experienced government administrator, who was the founder of both the École Française de Rome and the *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, and served as Director of both the

École Française d'Athènes and l'Enseignement Supérieur au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique, carried out an archaeological mission in Thrace: this was the first ever organized scholarly expedition specifically devoted to Thracian studies. Dumont died in 1884; his detailed report on Thrace was published in Paris in 1892 (Dumont 1892) and became a landmark study widely recognized by scholars. One year after the archaeological mission of Albert Dumont was carried out in Thrace, another leading European scholar, the German and Austrian geologist Ferdinand Ritter von Hochstetter, launched his expeditions in the northern Balkans to study the geology of the region. In addition to his detailed geological explorations, von Hochstetter published the first systematic report on Thracian tumuli spread throughout the European part of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the results from the excavation of two small tumuli located between Plovdiv and Edirne (von Hochstetter 1870; 1872).

Despite the exciting discoveries and the significant scholarly contributions that occurred from the 1850s to the 1870s, comprehensive archaeological exploration of ancient Thrace began only after the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, when several Czech scholars and intellectuals founded modern Bulgarian archaeology (Theodossiev, Koleva, and Borislavov 2001). Two of them, the brothers Karel and Hermengild Škorpil, were the first to document precisely the numerous Thracian tumuli spread across Bulgaria and to collect information about tombs and grave goods discovered during occasional, non-professional excavations. The results from their archaeological expeditions and field surveys were published in 1898 in Plovdiv (Škorpil and Škorpil 1898). This important publication was a significant scholarly achievement that fostered the development of Thracian studies in Bulgaria, but it was only a small part of the Škorpil brothers' major contribution to Bulgarian archaeology. The brothers were so devoted to Bulgaria that, according to their will, both were to be buried on Bulgarian soil: Hermengild, who died in 1923, was laid to rest in an early Christian monastery near Varna, while Karel, who survived his brother for over 20 years and died in 1944, was buried in Pliska, the medieval capital of the First Bulgarian Kingdom.

Another Czech scholar who played a prominent role in the foundation of Bulgarian archaeology was Konstantin Jireček, a renowned politician and historian. He developed a strong research interest in Bulgaria during his study at Charles University in Prague. Later, in 1879–1884, Jireček lived in Bulgaria and was appointed to different administrative positions, helping the young state to build its governmental and academic institutions. Thus, in 1881–1882 he served as Minister of Education. Still, before his arrival in Bulgaria, Jireček had published valuable studies on ancient historical geography (Jireček 1877), including an interesting attempt to localize the Celtic capital Tyllis in Hellenistic Thrace (Jireček 1876).

The Czech contribution to Thracian studies and linguistics was as important as their involvement in the foundation of Bulgarian archaeology. Wilhelm Tomaschek was one of the first scholars to produce comprehensive publications on Thrace. His articles were published in 1893 and 1894 in Vienna and, some 90 years later in 1980, they were reprinted as a book (Tomaschek 1980). Born in 1841 in Olomouc, Moravia, Tomaschek became a Professor in Geography and Oriental Studies, first at the University of Graz, and later at Vienna. Despite some earlier significant contributions to the study of ancient Thrace mentioned above, Tomaschek is usually considered the founding father of modern Thracology, mostly due to his interdisciplinary and analytical holistic approach (Fol 1984; Danov 1984). Shortly before Tomaschek's outstanding articles appeared, Friedrich Hiller von Gaertringen, a German Classical epigraphist and archaeologist just in the beginning of his academic career, wrote a remarkable study in Latin exploring the Greek written sources on ancient Thrace (Hiller von Gaertringen 1886). Several years later, Hiller von Gaertringen was elected a Corresponding Member of the German Archaeological Institute and was appointed Editor of *Inscriptiones Graecae*.

The earliest British scholarly involvement in the archaeology of ancient Thrace dates to the first decade of the twentieth century, when Frederick William Hasluck explored in detail and published one of the most impressive Thracian tholos tombs situated at Eriklice in the European part of Turkey (Hasluck 1910–1911; 1911–1912). The tomb was discovered in 1891 during the construction of an Ottoman military fort and contained an intact aristocratic burial with rich grave goods, which furnish a date ca. 350–320 BCE (Theodossiev 2011b). The publication of Hasluck was the first holistic and analytical study of this remarkable funerary monument and even today it may serve as an excellent model for studying and publishing the numerous late Classical and early Hellenistic monumental tombs of Thrace. Hasluck was a leading archaeologist and historian who graduated from King's College, Cambridge, and became affiliated with the British School at Athens, where he served as Librarian and Assistant Director from 1906 to 1915. Thus, while based in Athens, he had the opportunity to participate in several archaeological expeditions in Greece and Asia Minor and to travel widely throughout the entire region. During the First World War, Hasluck worked at the British Embassy in Athens and assisted British intelligence operations, which were carried out during the war.

About two decades after Hasluck's contribution to Thracian archaeology, the first fundamental scholarly work in English exploring ancient Thrace was published in 1926 by Stanley Casson (Casson 1926). Casson was a British scholar, born in 1889, who studied Classical Archaeology at Lincoln College and St. John's College in Oxford. Later, he held academic positions as Fellow of New College, Oxford, Lecturer at Bristol University, and Visiting

Professor at Bowdoin College in the United States. He also served as Assistant Director of the British School at Athens from 1919 to 1922 and in 1928–1929 he directed the British Academy excavations in Constantinople. Like Marsigli, Casson was not only a devoted and prolific scholar, but he also had a distinguished military career. During the First World War he served as a British Army officer with the East Lancashire Regiment and in 1915 was wounded during a battle in Flanders in Belgium. Subsequently, he served on the General Staff in Greece, Turkey, and Turkestan, before he was demobilized in 1919. During the Second World War, Casson was sent on a mission to Greece as Lieutenant Colonel in the British Intelligence Corps, where he served as an SOE Liaison Officer until he was killed in a plane crash in 1944. His book on ancient Macedonia, Thrace, and Illyria remains a seminal work that inspires those who study the northern Balkans.

The first American involvement in Thracian archaeology were the excavations conducted by Karl Lehmann in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods in Samothrace, which began in 1938 (Lehmann 1955). Although the site and its architecture were mostly relevant to Classical archaeology, some Thracian finds and inscriptions that were discovered during the excavations immediately grabbed the attention of scholars. Lehmann was born in 1894 in Rostock, Germany. He studied at the universities of Tübingen, Munich, and Göttingen and defended his dissertation in Classical archaeology at Berlin University. Later, Lehmann served as Assistant Director of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Rome and taught in Berlin, Heidelberg, and Münster. After the Nazi Party came to power in 1933, Lehmann was discharged from his academic position. He first went to Italy and then emigrated to the United States, where he was appointed Professor at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, in 1935 and continued his remarkable academic career.

A few decades earlier, however, still in the beginning of the twentieth century, foreign scholarly research and publication galvanized domestic academic interest in ancient Thrace. As a result, several Bulgarian and Romanian scholars began exploring Thracian history and archaeology and published numerous articles and books, both in their native languages and in German, English, and French. Their significant contribution was extremely important not only for the development of Thracian studies in Bulgaria and Romania, the countries that are the main successors of the Thracian heritage, but also for increasing foreign interest and fostering international scholarly collaboration. One of the leading scholars in that time was Gavril Kacarov, a Bulgarian ancient historian, classicist, and archaeologist born in 1874, who graduated from Leipzig University and had an impressive academic career. He published a number of influential articles and books in Bulgarian and was the pioneer of Thracian studies in Bulgaria. In addition, his detailed studies on the cultural and political history of Thrace (including the Roman period), published in

German and English in 1916 and 1930 (Kacarov 1916; 1930), were fundamental works for all Western scholars who were interested in the region. He published a monograph in German exploring the Thracian Horseman (Kacarov 1938), with a complete catalogue of the votive reliefs, which remains an important contribution. Another leading international scholar of that time was Vasile Pârvan, a famous Romanian ancient historian and archaeologist born in 1882, whose major and holistic works on the northern areas of Thrace, published in Romanian and English in 1926 and 1928 (Pârvan 1926; 1928), inspired many generations of scholars, both in Romania and abroad. Pârvan was the contemporary Romanian counterpart of Kacarov and is widely recognized as the founder of modern archaeology in Romania. Last, but not least, was Bogdan Filov, a famous and internationally renowned Bulgarian archaeologist and art historian, born in 1883. He studied in Germany at the universities of Würzburg and Leipzig and defended a doctoral dissertation at Freiburg University, which was subsequently published (Filov 1906). Filov had a brilliant academic career in Bulgaria, but his involvement in policy during the Second World War cost him his life; after the communist coup d'état in 1944, he was sentenced to death by the so-called "People's Tribunal" which was imposing communist terror throughout Bulgaria. Filov published a number of fundamental books and articles on various research topics, and is regarded as the founder of Thracian archaeology in Bulgaria. Two important studies were published in German in 1917 and 1934, which helped to put Thracian archaeology on the international scholarly scene (Filov 1917; 1934).

After the Second World War, there were new, official attempts to develop and institutionalize Thracian studies in both Bulgaria and Romania during the late 1960s and the 1970s; the process was supported by local political élites. Thus, in 1972, the Institute of Thracology was founded in Bulgaria, which was followed by the establishment of the Institute of Thracology in Romania in 1979. The main contribution of Thracology was the application of an interdisciplinary methodology, combining history, archaeology, Classical philology, epigraphy, and linguistics. In addition, international congresses of Thracology were regularly organized from 1972, which fostered international cooperation far beyond the Iron Curtain that divided Europe during the Cold War and limited the academic research of eastern European scholars. Christo Danov and Alexander Fol were two of the most prominent and internationally renowned scholars directly involved in the foundation of Thracology, who published numerous important articles and some seminal books (Danov 1976; Fol 1972; 1975). Simultaneously, during the 1970s, Bulgaria began to organize international exhibitions displaying the fascinating Thracian treasures, which were held predominantly in Western countries; this initiative publicized on a global scale Thracian studies and heritage and helped to overcome gradually the international isolation of Bulgarian scholars.

Today, 25 years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall, scholars in southeastern Europe are free to conduct their research in a wider international context, without the political and ideological restrictions that were imposed in the past. The present *Companion* clearly demonstrates how the academic community is benefited by the liberation of Europe and is excellent evidence of productive international scholarly collaboration. The reader of the *Companion* will find in-depth studies on a variety of exciting topics, many of them still unknown to scholars outside the region, while the separate chapters are written by leading experts in the relevant fields. Of particular interest is the study of the multifarious relations and interactions between Thrace, the Greco-Roman world, and Anatolia, which sheds new light on the complex aspects of important historical processes and contributes to our further understanding of antiquity in the Mediterranean and Europe.

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Chapter 2

Geography

Jan Bouzek and Denver Graninger

“Thracians, who occupy a boundless land”

(Dionysius Periegetes 323)

2.1 The Problem of Boundaries¹

The challenge of reconciling the “Thracians” as a population characterized by some shared cultural traits with “Thrace” as a geographical entity may have been recognized as early as Hecataeus of Miletus (late sixth to early fifth century BCE).² Put simply, how can Thrace be best defined in geographic terms? Must such a definition encompass most or all territories where “Thracians” were attested at some point in antiquity (extending from northeast Anatolia and the islands of the north Aegean to the Carpathian mountains and beyond in the north and Ionian (Illyrian) sea in the west)? If so, perhaps Andron of Halicarnassus (fourth century BCE), who offered what is probably the most expansive ancient definition of the region, was not too far off the mark (although the Bithynians of Asia Minor might disagree!): “Ocean married two women, Pompholyge and Parthenope, with whom he fathered four daughters, Asia and Libya with the one [Pompholyge], Europe and Thraike with the other [Parthenope], after whom he says that the continents are named” (FGrHist 10 F 7).

An additional layer of complexity is created by the superposition of political boundaries on this geography. The situation is perhaps no more confusing than currently, when an expansive definition of Thrace traces a territory that is occupied by multiple modern nation-states, including Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Moldova, and Ukraine, among others. As N. Theodossiev has so eloquently described in [Chapter 1](#), the challenging politics of the twentieth century have in some cases so impacted scholarship that this modern political fragmentation has been reinscribed in the ancient landscape. Not dissimilar circumstances obtained in antiquity as well; consider the changing borders of the Thracian kingdoms of the Odrysians (Thuc. 2.97) or Lysimachus (see [Chapter 6](#)), and Rome’s shifting demarcation of territories in the region (see [Chapters 7–8](#)). While such boundaries had an administrative utility that was no doubt influenced by geography, their primary purpose was not to identify discrete geographical regions.³

Any attempt to place fixed geographic borders on Thrace will run the risk of being arbitrary and it may be best to admit a certain flexibility and fluidity in

the word, present already in antiquity and continuing into the modern era. Contributors to this *Companion* have been encouraged to define the Thracian context of their subject matter in a manner unconstrained by modern or ancient politics; most attention falls upon a territorial space delimited by the north Aegean and Propontis on the south, the Black Sea on the east, the Danube on the north, and the line of the Morava and Strymon/Struma River valleys in the west (cf. pseudo-Scylax 67 and pseudo-Scymnus 664–665, who regard Thrace in similar terms). This chapter will offer a broad overview of the geography of ancient Thrace, including discussion of climate and natural resources, followed by a series of short studies that attempt to illuminate a range of representative Thracian places in their local context and factors conducive to their interrelation. Finally, the chapter concludes with a consideration of how the geography of ancient Thrace could be imagined by a range of representative Greek and Roman authors.

2.2 The Geography of Ancient Thrace: A Sketch⁴

Extension and division of the Thracian area

Thrace was a large, populous country. Herodotus mentioned that the Thracians were the second most numerous nation of his world after the Indians. Present-day Bulgaria and Romania, two countries in which most of the history of the ancient Thracians took place, are members of the European Union, as is Greece. Greek (or Aegean) Thrace lies between the Rhodope Mountains and the Aegean Sea; it included also the islands of Thasos and Samothrace. The European part of Turkey was also part of Thracian lands, extending from the lower stream of the Maritsa river (Gk. Hebros) to the Marmara Sea and the straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles, including Istanbul (formerly Constantinople, Konstantinopolis, and, even earlier, Byzantion), while the northwestern part of Asia Minor (Bithynia and Mysia) was also inhabited in ancient times by Thracian tribes. Northern Thrace extended – at least at certain times – to the eastern part of Hungary and southeastern part of Slovakia; the Triballi lived at the Morava river in eastern Serbia. In the northeast, Thracians (notably the Getae) lived in Moldavia, Bukovina (now divided between Romania and Ukraine), and in the most western part of the Ukraine (Volynia, Podolia). The Dnieper formed the eastern border of continuous Thracian settlement and only some elements of Thracian culture can be traced further to the east.

Northern Thrace

The Danube (Danubios, Istros) forms an axis of northern Thrace whose backbone was the Carpathian range enclosing Transylvania. The Carpathian region was considered to be the cradle of the Thracians and was the territory of the Dacians, who in the first century CE formed a kingdom which was a

rival even to the Roman empire. Their centers were in the southern Carpathians (Orastie mountains). Transylvania has mountains even in the central part (mainly Apuseni), but also fertile valleys with rivers between them (Mures-Maros, Cris-Körös, Somes), flowing mostly to the west to the Tisza; the Tisza was the border of the western part of the Thracian world. The Carpathians were rich in metal deposits, primarily containing copper, gold and iron.

The northeastern Thracians were separated from the others by the Carpathian range, which has many passes. The northeastern part of ancient Thrace included Dobrudzha, Moldavia, Podolia, and Volynia, that is, the eastern side of the Carpathians and the most western part of the Pontic steppe. Here the main rivers are the Siret, Prut, and Dniester (Tyros in Greek): the first two flow into the Danube and the third directly into the Black Sea. Most of this area was inhabited by the Getic tribes that had to withstand both their steppe neighbors in the east (Scythians, Sarmatians, and Bastarni) and Hellenistic and Roman armies. They seem to have merged eventually with the Dacians and disappeared from the stage of history. Today this area is divided between Romania and Moldavia on the northeast and Romanian and Bulgarian Dobrudzha in the northwestern part of the Black Sea (Pontus Euxinus). Except for the eastern promontory of the Carpathians, mainly steppe conditions prevail there.

Western Muntenia and Oltenia are situated between the Carpathians and the Danube. All rivers flow from the north to the south and empty into the Danube, the biggest of them being the Olt, separating Muntenia from Oltenia in the west. This area changes from the southern slopes of the Carpathians with deep river valleys to the Danube plain with abundant water. A belt on the left side of the Danube used to be flooded even in the last century to a width of 15 km, and still now there are many lakes and wetlands there.

Southern Thrace, including Asia Minor

The southern (Bulgarian) bank of the Danube is higher and drier than the northern. On the west side are plains, in the middle there are highlands and on the east is the steppe area of Dobrudzha. The southern border of the Danube region (and of the ancient Roman province Moesia) is formed by the Balkan mountains (Stara Planina, ancient name Haemus or Haimos) dividing modern Bulgaria into a northern – Danubian – and southern section (during Roman times the province Thracia). The Stara Planina extends from Vrashka Chuka (near Zajechar on the Bulgarian-Serbian border) to the Black Sea and reaches a height over 2300 m above sea level. The major passes include the Iskar valley in the west, followed by the Zlatitsa, Troyan, Shipka, Tvarditsa, and Varbitsa passes. Of the rivers flowing into the Danube, the Lom, Iskar and Yantra are the largest, if we omit the most westerly river – the Serbian Morava.

South of the eastern part of Haemus, the Strandzha mountains extend to the south alongside the Black Sea. Between the Thracian plain of Maritsa and the Rose Valley of Tundzha are the relatively low mountains Sredna Gora and Sakar Planina. South of Maritsa and east of the Mesta (Gk. Nestos) River are the Rhodopes, which reach into the Greek part of Thrace. Between the Mesta and Struma (Gk. Strymon) Rivers are Rila and Pirin mountains and further to the south (in Greek Thrace), Pangaion, known for its gold mines in ancient times. North of Rila, close to Sofia, is Vitosha, which is part of the Sredna Gora and includes other, much lower mountains in the area. Other mountains lie along the present Bulgarian-Macedonian border, in the south between the Struma and Vardar Rivers, whose valley formed normally the western border of Thracian tribes as well as – more to the north – the valley of the Morava in Serbia. Of the rivers flowing to the Aegean Sea, the Vardar/Axius was navigable, as were the lower Struma/Strymon and lower Mesta/Nestos. The most important connection with the Aegean Sea was offered by the Maritsa/Hebros, which had much more water than now; up to the First World War steamers were going regularly as far north as Plovdiv and Pazardjik.

Greek Thrace comprises the southern part of the Rhodopes, and the low seaside belt with wetlands and endemic malaria, which ended only after the wetlands were drained between the two world wars. The western frontier of Thrace was the Axios River (Vardar), and even the Chalkidike peninsulas were settled by Thracians, though some Greek settlements existed there very early; there is evidence of settlement at Torone as early as the eleventh century BCE. Aegean Thrace was, due to its Greek neighbors, the most civilized part of the country and it became also soon Hellenized. In the Rhodopes and also in Pirin and Pangaion, cattle-breeding was the traditional way of living: the cattle were in the mountains during summer and during winter on the coastal lowland by the Aegean Sea. Seasonal migration of the shepherds and their flocks survived from Thracian times until the closing of the Bulgarian-Greek border after the Second World War. The islands of Thasos and Samothrace were also settled by the Thracians until historical times, and a Thracian dialect continued to be used during the Samothracian Mysteries.

In Turkish Thrace west of the Propontis, hill country and small plains dominate. Mysia and Bithynia in northwest Asia Minor are similar geographically to the western coast of the Marmara Sea and the higher Anatolian mountains reach into the most northern Bithynia. It may be remembered, however, that this was also a region of many earthquakes; one quite recently helped our memory to imagine ancient disasters, which, however, had much less devastating effect on the small pastoral and agricultural villages of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age than in our times.

Climate and its changes; resources

Most of Mysia and Bithynia enjoy – together with Aegean Thrace – a Mediterranean climate where frost and snow stay only for a very short period. Most of ancient Thrace had a continental climate with longer frosts; in the mountain areas snow is present until May. In summer it is warmer everywhere than in central Europe and the difference in temperature between the Danube plain and Aegean Thrace is far smaller than in winter. In Transylvania and nearby areas rains fall all through the year, in southern Thrace only in spring, autumn, and winter; summer rains are exceptional. In the area of the Marmara Sea the rainy season lasts about two months. Rainfall is generally less in the east than in the west.

During prehistoric times and Classical antiquity climate was not always the same; a steppe climate sometimes extended to the eastern Balkans from the east and sometimes a central European climate with less distinction between winter and summer and with more rains in summer shifted toward the east. In such times agricultural civilizations spread to the east, in the opposite case agriculture declined and steppe cattle-breeding shifted to the west. Nowadays only Dobrudzha, together with parts of eastern Bulgaria and Turkish Thrace, keep their steppe-like character, but in some periods the steppe moved further toward the west, as may again happen through the greenhouse effect in our times. In the Danube area fertile black earth prevails, similar to the Ukrainian soils; together with Moldavia east of the Carpathians and the valleys of Maritsa and Strandzha, these were the most fertile areas of Thrace.

Mountains in the southern part of the Balkan peninsula now support fewer forests than existed in antiquity. With more forests in the Aegean Thrace water system and in nearby valleys the climate was milder and the temperature difference between day and night was smaller. There were more wild animals in the Balkans than now, but even during antiquity their number decreased. According to Greek sources, lions even lived in Thrace at the beginning of the historic era; but soon afterward European lions were no more than a legend. The lowlands and river valleys are mainly fertile agricultural areas, with the exception of Dobrudzha, which is nearer to steppe in its character. In the hill country pasture land dominated over the small fields.

Sources of metals were available and mined in Thasos, Mt. Pangaion, in the Rhodopes, and also in the Kazanlak Valley/Valley of the Roses (notably gold and copper), iron notably in the Strandzha area near Apollonia, in Dobrudzha near to the Greek colonies of Histria and Orgame, and in small quantities even elsewhere. Timber was also exported to Greece from Thrace.

2.3 Microfoundations⁵

As the preceding sections of this chapter have revealed, virtually every

geographic definition of Thrace will enclose a broad range of discrete regions, which are themselves composed of a still more varied array of places and landscapes (cf. Archibald 2013, 135–152). Following the lead of Horden and Purcell (2000, 53–88), this section attempts to balance the necessary and necessarily broad synoptic view of Thrace offered above with somewhat impressionistic sketches of two Thracian places – Koprivlen and Apollonia Pontica – that can be seen to function as microfoundations of the broader region: Thrace was filled with such places.⁶ While both Koprivlen and Apollonia possessed resources sufficient to attract and sustain substantial settlement, the two sites lay astride powerful, longer-term currents of contact and exchange that seem to have both influenced decisively the types of communities that developed there in the first millennium BCE and contributed to a network of relationships that gave the region of Thrace some coherence. Two other dynamics central to Thracian geography are also well illustrated here: the connection and mutual interdependence of highlands and lowlands, as well as that of coastal and inland regions.⁷

Koprivlen

Recent survey and excavation in the middle Mesta River valley in southwestern Thrace near the modern village of Koprivlen have exposed a series of Bronze Age and Thracian settlements, as well as Late Roman and Medieval cemeteries, that test long-held assumptions about the relationship between the Aegean coast and its adjacent hinterland in ancient Thrace. The Late Bronze Age settlement has produced imported Mycenaean pottery ([Chapter 16](#)), which is suggestive of Koprivlen’s implication in Aegean exchange at an early date. The Early Iron Age settlement (seventh–fifth century BCE) appears to have been substantial and organized, with evidence of monumental architecture, and to have spawned satellite settlements in the area ([Chapter 9](#)); finds indicate that the site remained part of a north Aegean economy. Study of known premodern and early modern roads in the region of the middle Mesta have demonstrated the centrality of Koprivlen as an important node in a broader chain of communication and trade linking the western Rhodope mountains and, by extension, the upper Maritsa (anc. Hebros) valley of inland Thrace, with the Aegean coast; indeed, the routes leading north from the coast at Kavala (anc. Neapolis?) via the Drama plain and from the lower Strymon via the Serres plain appear to have joined at Koprivlen and continued north (Delev and Popov 2002). While both agriculture and metal-working seem to have been staples of the local economy in the Early Iron Age, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the settlement, as Popov notes, was “a trade center and transport hub with mediating and controlling functions,” the prominence of which may anticipate in some measure the later and better attested settlement at Adzhiyska Vodenitsa/“Pistiros” (see [Chapter 9](#)).

Apollonia Pontica

The site of the ancient Greek colonial settlement at Apollonia Pontica (mod. Sozopol), founded ca. 610 BCE, offers the first good, substantial harborage north of the Bosphoros on the western coast of the Black Sea (Isaac 1986, 239–240). The nearby foothills of the low, rugged Strandzha mountains were rich in copper, which seems to have been mined by the local population and probably played a large role in attracting Greek settlement (cf. [Chapter 19](#)). Whether the Late Bronze Age copper ingots, comparable to those in contemporary circulation in the eastern Mediterranean, discovered by land and by sea in the vicinity of the later Greek settlement were destined for import or export, they strongly suggest that this region, too, was implicated in a broader network of Aegean exchange at this time (Doncheva 2012). Some fertile agricultural land was available, as was timber. The Bay of Burgas opens up to the west of Apollonia, joining a cluster of large, freshwater lakes. Rich in fish in modern times (Isaac 1986, 242), the lakes also offered a critical point of entry into the Maritsa valley and the great plain of Thrace. Apparent satellite settlements as far west as Karnobat offer some indication of the extent of influence of the city in the Archaic and Classical periods (cf. [Chapter 27](#)) and the identification of the Apollonians in the “Pistiros Inscription” (Chankowski and Domaradzka 1999) with citizens of Apollonia Pontica, though marginalized in much scholarship (e.g., Bravo and Chankowski 1999, 286), warrants additional consideration. Meaningful connections also existed to the south over Strandzha (Isaac 1986, 144) and along the coast to the north, where Anchialos, rich in salt (Khrischer, Georgiev, and Tchotchov 1982), was founded under Apollonian influence on the northern passage into the Bay of Burgas (Str. 7.6.1) and grew to become a bone of contention with the neighboring coastal city of Mesambria in the Hellenistic period (IGBulg 1² 388bis). The combination of defensible site located in a resource rich environment on major inland and coastal communication routes made the settlement not only powerful, but desired by prospective regional hegemon, whether Thracian dynasts or Roman commanders.

2.4 Roads and Connectivity⁸

The preceding case studies of Koprivlen and Apollonia Pontica have offered examples of how discrete places in Thrace could be interrelated with one another by land, river, and sea (cf. Archibald 2013, 223–227). This section continues to develop that theme, with particular emphasis on major overland routes in Thrace (for rivers, the most prominent of which seem to have been navigable by flat-bottomed boats for some portion of their course, see above and, e.g., De Boer 2010 and Tsonchev 1962; for the sea, see Isaac 1986, *passim*).

The road network of Thrace in the Roman period appears relatively dense and

well known (Madzharov 2009; cf. [Chapter 7](#)). Three major overland routes crossed Thrace and knit it into the broader Balkans. Little is known of the so-called *via Pontica*, which ran north–south along the western coast of the Black Sea. The *via Egnatia* ran east–west along the northern coast of the Aegean and connected, at its fullest extent, Constantinople with Dyrrachium on the Adriatic coast (see, e.g., Lolos 2007). A developed road system often described as the *via diagonalis* in modern scholarship ran northwest–southeast and linked Constantinople with Singidunum (mod. Belgrade) via the Maritsa and Morava river valleys (Jireček 1877 is still fundamental; cf. Popovic 2010 for later history). Additional roads ran north–south and east–west through the interior of the region and linked major administrative, military, and economic centers.

Some elements of the Roman network clearly overlay or were influenced by earlier roads. Consider, for example, a late third- or early second-century BCE boundary stone from Kalambaki, near Drama, which measures the distances in stadia to Philippi and Amphipolis (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2001); a Roman milestone from the *via Egnatia* had previously been discovered in the immediate vicinity, announcing Trajan’s refurbishment of the road ca. 112 CE (Collart 1935). Thucydides’ mention of a 13-day journey overland from Byzantion (mod. Istanbul) to approximately the location of Mt. Vitosha (2.97.2) south of modern Sofia well corresponds to the length of later itineraries for this passage (Jireček 1877, 2–3). “Thracians” do seem to have acquired a reputation for road-building in antiquity; Sitalkes was able to lead his forces against Macedonia in 428 BCE along a road that he had previously cut for a campaign against the Paionians (Thuc. 2.98.1) and Alexander III “the Great” is said to have deployed a team of Thracians to build a road over a particularly challenging stretch of highlands in Anatolia (Arr. Anab. 1.26.1).⁹ While such roads almost certainly would not have resembled those of the Roman period with respect to surface quality or infrastructure, there is by the same token no reason to regard Thracian road-building as purely situational and primarily military in character.

Useful insight is again offered by the “Pistiros inscription.” The document, which provides critical details for the administration of trade within a network of emporia in Thrace and specifically mentions Greek traders from Thasos, Maroneia, and Apollonia, indicates clearly that “no taxes are to be collected on goods arriving by road” (ll. 20–21). If the Pistiros mentioned in the inscription can be identified with the Classical and early Hellenistic settlement at Adzhiyska Vodenitsa near the inscription’s findspot, then the inscription may furnish additional powerful evidence for regular, overland trade in Classical Thrace on roads. The apparent reference to goods arriving by wagon (according to a widely accepted restoration in ll. 25–26) may lend further support to this interpretation (cf. Hatzopoulos 2013, 17–19).

2.5 Imaginary Thrace¹⁰

The impact of physical geography on settlement life and networks of communication and exchange selectively addressed above may obscure the impact of this geography – and, often enough, the imagined inhabitants of those lands – on (non-Thracian) written sources. Consider, for example, Homer’s *Iliad*, where, as Greeks and Trojans battle by the ships, Zeus “turned away his bright eyes, and looked afar, upon the land of the Thracian horsemen” (13.3–4: trans. A. T. Murray), as well as those of the Mysians, Hippemolgoi, and Abii; the tone of the passage may be idealizing the life and land of these peripheral peoples (cf. Romm 1992, 53 n. 21). Compare Herodotus, where territory north of Thrace, which is presented in this instance as bounded by the Danube river, is empty and limitless (5.9: cf. Romm 1992, 32–41). Despite the deep implication of Thrace in a broad array of supra-regional political and economic contexts sketched throughout this volume, beginning already in prehistory and extending from central Europe to the Black Sea to the eastern Mediterranean, and the direct, human knowledge of the region that such networks imply (cf. the Athenian Thracophiles of [Chapter 20](#)), influential passages in the Greek literary tradition represent the region as liminal and quite literally near the end of the earth. In changed political circumstances, the real and the imaginary might blend, as evidenced by Ovid’s exile poetry, which seems often to depict either tension or agreement between earlier ethnographies of these lands and the poet’s presentation of his own lived experience in Tomis, replete with truths and distortions (cf. Batty 1994; contrast Fitton Brown 1985).

While a contrast between north and south seems to characterize much of these earlier presentations of Thrace, the fuller incorporation of Thrace within the Roman empire created new frameworks within which Thrace could be imagined. Ammianus’ famous description of the Succus pass, which lay on the route of the *via diagonalis* and provided access from the western edge of the great plain of Thrace, over the Ihtimanska Sredna Gora, and into the plain of Ihtiman and thence to points further northwest, marks the feature as a boundary between Illyricum and Thrace: “As if nature had foreknowledge that the surrounding nations must come under the sway of Rome, the pass was purposely so fashioned that in former times it opened obscurely between hills lying close together, but afterwards, when our power rose to greatness and splendor, it was opened for the passage of carts; and yet it could sometimes be so closed as to check the attempts of great leaders and mighty peoples” (trans. J. C. Rolfe: 21.10.3). The cultural geography here may turn rather on an opposition between civilized west and “barbarian” east (cf. Vergin 2013, 142–144), both incorporated within the Roman empire, and resonates surprisingly strongly with contemporary debates about the ideological location of “the Balkans” in modern popular, political, and scholarly discourse (see, e.g., Todorova 1994).¹¹

Imagination, of course, knows no geographical limit, and this exploratory chapter will close with a possible example of the recreation of a Thracian geography in a non-Thracian location. A famous discovery of a rich vein of silver in the Laurion region of Attica in 483 BCE would fund a dramatic expansion of the size and capability of the Athenian navy and alter Athenian history for the remainder of the fifth century. The so-called “Maroneia” strike ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 22.7) recalls the district or village within the Laurion where it was discovered (cf. Crosby 1950, 194; attested in *Agora* 19, P5, l. 59; P6, [17]; P13, l. 31; P18, l. 91; P24, l. 18; P28, ll. 23–[24]) and is identical to that of the great city on the Aegean coast of Thrace. Other Thracian toponyms (better, Greek names for Thracian places) appear in Classical inscriptions associated with the Laurion, including Pangaion (*Agora* 19, P6, ll. [17]–18; P27, ll. 6, 7), so revered as a source of metals, and the somewhat less familiar Antisara (*Agora* 19, L4a, l. 86), which was located west of Neapolis (mod. Kavala?) in Aegean Thrace and served as port for the city of Datos (see Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 856). It is likely that some of the riches of Pangaion were exported from this facility in Aegean Thrace and J. Young has suggested that Attic Antisara may have played an analogous role in the Laurion (Young 1941, 182). While such toponymy may have its origins in the Peisistratid tyranny, given the elder Peisistratos’ connections in the Pangaion region and more intensive mining in the Laurion that begins in the second half of the sixth century BCE (Kakavogiannis 2005, 89), the persistent presence of Thracians in the region as miners in the Classical period and beyond lent some cultural substance (see, e.g., Themelis 1989, attesting to worship of Bendis in Laurion) to this rich corner of Thrace recreated on the thin soil of Attica.

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Guide to Further Reading

Boué, Ami. 1840. *La Turquie d’Europe: ou, Observations sur la géographie, la géologie, l’histoire naturelle, la statistique, les mœurs, les coutumes, l’archéologie, l’agriculture, l’industrie, le commerce, les gouvernements divers, le clergé, l’histoire et l’état politique de cet*

empire. Paris: A. Bertrand. Vast, four-volume ethnography and history of the Ottoman possessions in Europe, with ample, incisive observations on the geography of ancient Thrace.

Boué, Ami. 1854. *Recueil d'itinéraires dans la Turquie d'Europe: Détails géographiques, topographiques et statistiques sur cet Empire*. Vienna: W. Braumüller. Offers extensive discussion of landscape and routes in the European territories of the Ottoman empire, including much of relevance to the study of ancient Thrace.

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Koder, J., et alii, eds. 1976–. *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*. 13 vols. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences. Full presentation of the road network of the Byzantine empire, with critical discussion of earlier periods of historical geography and topography. Among published and forthcoming publications, vols. 6 (Thrakien: 1991), 10 (Aigaion Pelagos: 1998), and 12 (Ostthrakien: in preparation) are relevant to the study of ancient Thrace.

Isaac, Benjamin. 1986. *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest* (Studies of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society 10). Leiden: Brill. Offers an accessible overview of the coastal geography of Thrace, from the Strymon to the Danube.

Archibald, Zosia. 1998. "Introduction." In *The Odrysian Kingdom of Thrace. Orpheus Unmasked*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Contains excellent discussion of the geography of Odrysian Thrace, including geology, climate, soils, and minerals (10–24).

King, Charles. 2005. *The Black Sea. A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Solid introduction to the history of the Black Sea region, with ample detail on geography.

Gyuzelev, Martin. 2008. *The West Pontic Coast between Emine Cape and Byzantion during the First Millennium BC*. Burgas: Lotus. Thorough discussion of geography and archaeology of the southwestern coast of the Black Sea.

Madzharov, M. 2009. *Roman Roads in Bulgaria. Contribution to the Development of Roman Road Systems in the Provinces of Moesia and Thrace*. Veliko Tarnovo: Faber. Full review of the evidence for the Roman road network in the modern territory of Bulgaria, although caution is due on individual points.

Notes

- 1 This section is authored by D. Graninger.
- 2 Cf. F. Jacoby, FGrHist 1 F 146–183, who suggests that for Hekataios Thrace as a geographic space extended to the Danube, while “Thracians” themselves lived beneath Haemus (mod. Balkan mountains, Stara Planina).
- 3 For political fragmentation of a different sort, see Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 810–973, where that territory of Thrace where poleis are found has been broken up into seven regions: Thrace from Axios to Strymon; Thrace from Strymon to Nestos; Thrace from Nestos to Hebros; Inland Thrace; Thracian Chersonesos; Propontic Thrace; and the Black Sea Area.
- 4 This section is authored by J. Bouzek and is based substantially on Bouzek 2004.
- 5 This section is authored by D. Graninger.
- 6 Horden and Purcell 2000, 53: “the principal elements in a microecology’s character derive as much from its changing configuration within the web of interactions around it, across aggregates of ‘short distances’, as from any long-lasting physical peculiarities.”
- 7 Given the constraints of space, there is an unavoidable Aegean/eastern Mediterranean bias in these case studies. While it is both possible and absolutely essential to recover a still broader range of perspectives on Thrace and Thracian geography, a reconstruction of the view of Thrace from, e.g., the Pontic steppe of Scythia or La Tène central Europe relies almost entirely on material evidence and must therefore be made at greater length (as indeed it will be in this volume in Chapters 23–24).
- 8 This section is authored by D. Graninger.
- 9 Cf. Thracian maintenance of the Persian royal road (Hdt. 7.115; see also Chapter 21).
- 10 This section is authored by D. Graninger.
- 11 E.g., “Balkanism and its subject are imprisoned in a field of discourse in which ‘Balkans’ is paired in opposition to ‘West’ and ‘Europe’, while ‘Balkanism’ is the dark other of ‘western civilization’. When the Balkans were part of the scatter pattern of invective aimed at the east and ‘Orientalism’ was the other necessary for the self-essentializing ‘West’ and ‘Europe’, there existed the prospect of their rediscovery in a positive fashion. With the rediscovery of the east and orientalism as independent semantic values, the Balkans are left in Europe’s thrall, anti-civilization, alter ego, the dark side within” (Todorova 1994, 482).

Chapter 3

Ethnicity and *Ethne*

Denver Graninger

3.1 Introduction

However Thrace is defined geographically, the ancient Greek literary sources present a region filled with multifarious *ethne* (sing. *ethnos*), often translated into English, however inadequately, as “tribe.” A dozen or so distinct *ethne* are mentioned in Herodotus’ *Histories* (esp. 5.3–10, 7.118–9), Strabo knew of 22 (7a, fr. 48: Meineke 1877), and Thucydides, who was in a better position than most to discuss such matters, could present a dizzying sketch of the region’s political and ethnic geography, filled with *ethne* and stitched together in a tenuous alliance by Sitalkes in 429/8 (2.95–98).¹ Considering the full range of Greek and Roman sources known to him at that time, B. Lenk (1936) could count more than 50 different names of Thracian tribes.

The two words in the title of this chapter, despite their etymological relationship, tend to pull in different, if related, directions and it will be useful to situate both in a scholarly context briefly at the outset. The word *ethnos* had an exceptionally broad valence (see Fraser 2009, 1–11) and it is not always clear what defines such groups. Ancient Greek sources tend to regard *ethne* as characteristic of the “barbarian” world as well as more peripheral regions of the Greek mainland (e.g., Aitolia, Achaia, Thessaly). In the case of the Greeks, earlier generations of modern scholars often developed the terms of this contrast into a totalizing polarity, with backward *ethne* opposed to sophisticated *poleis* (sing. *polis*) or “city-states”; thanks to a closer integration of archaeological evidence with literary sources, however, the terms of this opposition have begun recently to collapse and Greek *ethne* can now be regarded as forms of social and political organization well suited to regions posing particular challenges of landscape, population density, and resources and as neither intrinsically primitive and backward nor antithetical to the world of the *polis* (Morgan 2003 remains fundamental). Such a revision could equally well be extended in the case of the non-Greek *ethne*.

The study of ethnicity in the ancient Mediterranean has experienced a similarly radical revision in recent years. While nineteenth-century, “blood-and-soil,” primordialist models of the ethnic group and a concomitant attention to the migrations of such groups into and out of various territories have continued to exercise some influence within the field of ancient history, if passively so, due to inertia and the continuing utility of such models in political debates, usually of nationalist or irredentist character, ethnicity is

now increasingly modeled as an instrumentalist, discursive identity to which an individual may voluntarily ascribe, and not an irreducible component of an individual's genetic or cultural makeup. Claims to shared ancestry and territory, which furnish two criteria essential to recognizing ethnic groups in some models of ethnicity (e.g., Hall 1997, 17–32), constitute in effect a discourse that may or may not have any relationship to an “objective” reality; on this view, ethnic groups had been (and therefore must continually be) narrated into existence. The key research questions shift accordingly, with less emphasis on the whos, wheres, and whats of racial or genetic descent and population migration, and greater emphasis on the hows and whys of the origins, maintenance, and ultimate impact of narratives of shared descent and territory. Recent scholarship continues to embroider upon this foundation and has drawn non-literary sources into the scholarly conversation about ancient ethnicity (e.g., Antonaccio 2010; Cifani and Stoddart 2012).

Not every ethnos was an ethnic group, nor, conversely, was every ethnic group an ethnos. The aim of this chapter is to examine select and representative types of ethnos identity on display in ancient Thrace within the framework of recent scholarship on ethne and ethnicity sketched above; traditional approaches to the Thracian tribes via ethnonyms and historical geography will not be employed here.² I proceed by case studies and first investigate a series of descriptions of multiple Thracian ethne in context to see what can be gleaned about the organization and interrelation of these groups from a close reading of the sources. [Section 3.3](#) then takes a diachronic approach and explores the potential contribution of material evidence to understanding local identities in Thrace, before discussing at greater length the evolution of a single tribal identity, that of the Bessi, over the course of Greek and Roman antiquity. In the final [section 3.4](#), I turn to the most problematic Thracian identity of all, that of the “Thracians” themselves, and meditate briefly on one of its many possible valences in the Classical period.

3.2 Synchrony

429/8

Thucydides offers an abbreviated overview of the forces led by Sitalkes against Perdiccas in 429/8. The passage presents an opportunity to grasp some aspects of how one reasonably well-informed outsider made sense of the diversity Thracian ethne; it is worth quoting in full:

Beginning with the Odrysians, he [Sitalkes] first called out the Thracian tribes subject to him between Mounts Haemus and Rhodope and the Euxine and Hellespont; next the Getae beyond Haemus, and the other tribes settled south of the Danube in the neighborhood of the Euxine, who, like the Getae, border on the Scythians and are armed in the same manner,

being all mounted archers. Besides these he summoned many of the independent Thracian hill tribes, swordsmen called Dii, mostly inhabiting Mount Rhodope, some of whom came as mercenaries, others as volunteers; also the Agrianes and the Leaeans; there the empire of Sitalkes ends and the territory of the independent Paeonians begins. Bordering on the Triballi, also independent, were the Treres and the Tilataeans, who dwell to the north of Mount Scombrus and extend toward the setting sun as far as the river Oskius.

(2.96: trans. R. Crawley)

Two groups of tribes receive the designation Thracian in Thucydides' overview: first there are those tribes subject to Sitalkes' power who reside between the Balkan and Rhodope mountains, extending to the east and southeast as far as the Black Sea and Hellespont, among whom only the Odrysians are specifically mentioned; second are those Thracian hill-tribes of the Rhodope mountains who are styled as autonomous and so presumably not subjects of Sitalkes, among whom the Dii are specifically mentioned. Geography and political status with respect to a regional strongman or king like Sitalkes form the key axes of Thucydides' analysis and it stands to reason that such characteristics were important secondary indicia of the identity of these tribes. The Dii receive additional elaboration, however: they are swordsmen and join Sitalkes' expedition either as hired mercenaries or as volunteer freebooters. Style of combat and potential occupations thus enter into this taxonomy of *ethne*.

The rest of this description is populated by peoples that do not specifically receive the designation Thracian, although they are regularly treated as such in modern scholarship. Here again we find the key lines of Thucydides' analysis recurring. Physical geography is again prominent in identifying these groups, with the Getae, for example, positioned with respect to key elements in (northern) Thracian topography like the Balkan mountains, the Danube river, and the Black Sea. This geography again assumes political dimensions with distinct *ethne* mapped in relation to the *arche* (translated above as "empire") of Sitalkes, which is imagined to extend to the west, encompassing the Agrianes and Leaeans at its limits. War culture appears in the case of the Getae and other tribes bordering on the Scythians, who share the Scythians' talents as mounted archers.

Physical geography, political status, and traditional methods of combat thus present the rudiments of an *ethnos* taxonomy in Thucydides. In the case of two of these criteria, geography and war, it becomes possible to bring material evidence into the conversation. The number of recorded finds of ancient weapons from Thrace is ever increasing and there is strong regional variation at certain periods (see [Chapter 28](#)). Likewise, a series of Thracian landscapes have begun to emerge in light of survey archaeology (e.g., Sobotkova 2013), which, in combination with comparative studies of how landscape could be

implicated with group identity (e.g., Stoddart and Neil 2012, 291), will undoubtedly expose further layers of difference in the types of geographic observations made by Herodotus and Thucydides. The goal here is not to identify, for example, the Dii or the Getae in the archaeological record and to delimit precisely their territory, but merely to demonstrate that such differences did in fact exist and could have assisted the development or maintenance of group identity. Political status is much more ephemeral in practice, which Thucydides' description draws out quite clearly, and not always visible in the material record.³

480

Thucydides is not of course innovative in presenting such an analysis. Herodotus offered a similar model in his *Histories*. Leaving aside for the moment his abbreviated Thracian logos at the beginning of book 5, we glimpse a similar state of play in 480, as Xerxes makes his way along the north Aegean coast passing through the territories of the Paitians, Kikonos, Bistonos, Sapaianoi, Dersaionoi, and Satraianoi (7.110); all were forced to join the expedition, with the exception of the Satraianoi, who are free, live high in the mountains, and are adept at making war (7.111.1; for an important discussion of the passage, see Delev 2005, 115–119). As in Thucydides, geography, political status, and war culture again combine to differentiate the ethne in this part of Thrace in the eyes of an outsider.⁴ But it is the continuation of Herodotus' description that opens up space between his account and Thucydides', revealing additional layers of complexity in defining these groups:

[The Satraianoi] possess the oracle of Dionysus; it is situated on the loftiest part of the mountains, and of the Satraianoi, the Bessi serve as the spokesmen (hoi propheteuontes) of the sanctuary. The prophetess (promantis) there delivers oracles just as the one at Delphi does, in a manner no more complicated than the one used there.

(7.111.2: trans. A. L. Purvis)

These lines, which continue to torture historians and archaeologists of ancient religion alike, imply that the cult site was central to Satraian identity. Such a datum refocuses our inquiry from the implication of identity with general landscapes to a specific place, a cult site in this case, and thus that “place” and religion, like geography, political status, and war, could serve to distinguish these ethne from one another. Even more intriguing is Herodotus' identification of an apparent subset of the Satraianoi (other interpretations are possible), the Bessi, who play an especially critical role in the cult. Vertical distinctions between different ethne give way to horizontal distinctions within individual ethne – a dimension that can only occasionally be apprehended in the sources but was likely a fundamental aspect of life.

In the absence of local, Thracian sources imputing narratives of shared descent and territory to such ethne, we must be wary of regarding such differences as constitutive of anything like an ethnic identity. But such factors could and did distinguish these ethne from one another at any point in time; as their geography, political status, cult, and war culture evolved over time, as they did regularly, such ethnos identities could be correspondingly adjusted. Marking here a provisional limit to this synchronic analysis of groups of Thracian ethne, we now turn to explore the evolution of identities in diachronic perspective.

3.3 Diachrony

Material case studies

If our ability to recognize an ethnic group must depend on literary discourse, then any attempt to recognize such a discourse in the case of Thrace is automatically hamstrung by the character of the sources. But if a more expansive definition of ethnicity is adopted (e.g., Jones 1997) or, barring that, we can be content to recognize the presence of equally powerful markers of group identity, ethnic or otherwise, in the material record, potentially useful diachronic perspectives may be revealed.

For example, local variants of shapes from the Early Iron Age pottery repertoire from southeast Thrace discovered on Samothrace may suggest a cultural affinity between the inhabitants of the two regions and, at the same time, an assertion of difference within this framework. Dolmens, so characteristic in the landscape of Early Iron Age southeastern Thrace are also reported from the island (cf. [Chapter 10](#)), as are, from the period after the establishment of the Greek colony, inscriptions in Greek script recording a non-Greek language (cf. [Chapter 17](#)), and at least one burial exhibiting traces of post-mortem mutilation otherwise known from ritual pits in Thrace (cf. [Chapter 11](#)). P. Ilieva has argued that such data suggest not only the presence of a population with strong cultural affinities to southeast Thrace in the pre-colonial period, but also the continuing influence of such indigenous cultural traits after the establishment of the colony, ultimately resulting in a hybrid, Samothracian identity expressed most clearly in the famed cult of the Megaloi Theoi on the island (2010, 140–148).

A second set of examples is drawn from recent, sophisticated studies of iron and steel technology in north Aegean Thrace, where M. Kostoglou has drawn attention to the fundamentally local character of techniques of iron production at sites like Mesambria-Zone and Abdera and suggested both that local Thracian and colonial Greek populations developed a shared habitus rooted in such technology and, more impressively, that this habitus varied from location to location, given that the techniques for metal refinement and production

were so dependent on the character of the raw material, which itself could vary dramatically from region to region (2008, 80; 2010, 180–185).

While it would be unwise to attach a specific ethnos label to any of these non-Greek populations in the north Aegean, such case studies offer vivid impressions of a far broader range of practices that could serve to constitute and define groups than what is suggested in the literary sources and indicate how fluid identities rooted in such practices could be over time. Nor should we think that these types of interaction were occasional or irregular in the region: the “culture of creativity” in the north Aegean that Z. Archibald has so richly described was predicated in part on “strong interactions with people from peripheral areas” (Archibald 2013, 191; the observations can be extended to the Black Sea as well). The model of a “mosaic” of Thracian ethne, so influentially described by Thucydides and Herodotus, may mislead, particularly in diachronic perspective.

Bessi

Among the Thracian ethne or, rather, those ethne typically regarded as Thracian, the Odrysians, Getae, and Triballians seem to have been the most powerful in the Classical and Hellenistic periods and correspondingly loom largest in the literary record. They are regularly associated with the more spectacular and enigmatic archaeological discoveries in the southeastern Balkans. Of the remaining Thracian ethne, many are mere names, although in some cases it is possible to glimpse the outlines of a particular tribe at various points in antiquity, which reflect on the potential power and dynamism of such identities. One such group are the Bessi (fundamental studies: Katsarov 1924; Tacheva 1997; Delev 2012), whom we have already encountered in the service of an oracular sanctuary in Thrace.

Herodotus’ somewhat vague text hints that he understood the Bessi as forming a distinct group within the Satraians. Ignored in subsequent literary sources of the Classical period, they next appear as a target of Philip V’s campaigns in the region in 183 (Polyb. 23.8.3–7; Liv. 39.53.1–14) and become more prominent in the historical record after the Roman establishment of provincia Macedonia in 148 (Delev 2012, 14–16). The later second and first century seems to have witnessed extensive conflict between Rome and various Balkan ethne, among which the Bessi are prominent. A roster of late Republican luminaries found themselves opposite the Bessi, including M. Minucius Rufus ca. 106–100, Lucullus at the time of the Third Mithridatic War, C. Octavius ca. 60, L. Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus ca. 57–55, and Brutus in 43 (sources in Delev 2012, 16–28). The evidence for Minucius’ campaigns is particularly revealing about developing perceptions of the Bessi in the context of periodic conflict with Rome. The Delphians honor him with an equestrian statue, including a bilingual inscription, for his victory in war against the Galatian Skordistai and against “the Bessi and the

rest of the Thracians” (pros Bessous [k]ai tous loipous Thrai[kas]: Bousquet 1991, 177–179 (SEG 41.516)); a virtually identical monument for Minucius is also known from Europos in Macedonia (SEG 41.570). To judge from the disparate locations of these two awards, the conflict was geographically broad and reflects the exceptional military mobility of the Bessi; equally prominent is the privileged presentation of the Bessi in these formulations: their presence is stressed so that they appear as the most notable of the Thracians.

In 29/8, the Bessi, now controlling the sanctuary of Dionysus, were stripped of this territory by M. Licinius Crassus, who gave it to his local allies, the Odrysians (Dio 51.25.5). The matter did not end here, for ca. 15–11:

Vologaesus, a Bessian from Thrace and a priest of the Dionysus worshipped by that people, gained a following by practicing many divinations, and with these adherents revolted. He conquered and killed Rhascyporis, the son of Cotys, and afterwards, thanks to his reputation for supernatural power, he stripped Rhoemetalces, the victim’s uncle, of his forces without a battle and compelled him to take flight. In pursuit of him he invaded the Chersonese, where he wrought great havoc.

(Dio 54.34.5: trans. E. Cary)

While the Bessi would eventually be defeated by L. Calpurnius Piso, it is worth pausing to appreciate the magnitude of their achievement. The charismatic Vologaesus, priest of the oracular Dionysus, is able to motivate the Bessi to defeat in battle scions of the Odrysian dynasty, Rhascyporis and Rhoemetalces, pursuing the latter as far as the Thracian Chersonese. Bessian identity appears still potent at this point and rooted in the specific place of the Dionysus sanctuary; this geographic aspect of their identity draws them into conflict with the Odrysians and, by extension, the Romans.

Bessi would go on to fill the ranks of both the Roman military (Tacheva 1999) and, more intriguingly, some Roman catalogues of representative barbarians (on the phenomenon in general, see Smith 1988, 70–77). Among the parade of ethne known from the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias, an inscription indicates that the Bessi were represented (ethnous Besson: Reynolds 1981, 326, no. 18 (SEG 31.927); while the building was constructed between the reigns of Tiberius and Nero, paleography and political history suggest a date in the later first or early second century CE for the monument of the Bessi). A female figure associated with the inscription bears a headband worn in Dionysian fashion and stands next to a tall hat (Smith 1988, 66–67, pl. IV). A series of murals from a second-century CE house of a local elite in Valentia (Spain) representing peoples and places from the edge (or just beyond) of the Roman empire, including the Bessi ([ethnos] Besso[n]), has been published recently (Hoz 2007 (SEG 57.992)). Only the bottom half of the female personification is preserved at Valentia; the figure may perhaps have been associated with a distinctive “northern hat.”

This partial account of the admittedly patchy evidence plots a distinctive trajectory. The Bessian identity, somewhat marginal in Herodotus and ignored in later Classical authors, reemerges in the later Hellenistic and Roman periods as powerfully polyvalent: on the one hand, it seems to describe an actual ethnos that, while continuing both to embody some of the “highlander” qualities represented in earlier Classical ethnographies of Thrace and to reveal a strong association with a prominent Dionysus sanctuary in southern Thrace, has grown somewhat less attached to its fifth-century territory (for the location of the *strategia* Bessica in Roman Thrace, see now Topalilov 2013, with further literature) and posed a persistent military challenge to Rome in the later Hellenistic and early Imperial period; on the other, such an identity could be abstracted and made representative and exemplary of the inhabitants of the southeastern Balkans. To be sure, the literary and epigraphic evidence discussed above often belongs to geographic contexts quite removed from Thrace and there is no sense that we have recovered anything other than an outsider’s perspective on the Bessi. Such evidence nonetheless has value and the potential for outsiders’ perceptions to shape identities cannot be underestimated. The larger point to emerge from this section is that ethnos identities were not static, but could and did evolve quite dramatically over time in response to changing social, political, and economic circumstances.⁵

3.4 “Thracians”

In a learned article discussing Thracians in Ptolemaic Egypt, J. Bingen has astutely commented: “We know how embarrassing for nonspecialists the ambiguities surrounding the notion of ‘Thrace/Thracian’ can be: is this an ethnic expression, a geographic expression (with the Bithynian onomastics creating one more problem), a political expression (as for instance in Lysimachus’ short-lived kingdom of Thrace), or simply the denomination of a military unit with servicemen from heterogeneous origins?” (2007, 83–84). Despite the early appearance of “Thracians” in Homeric epic (see [Chapter 4](#)) and regularly in subsequent sources, clearly the only prudent answer to the questions “Who were the ‘Thracians’?” or “What does ‘Thracian’ mean?” is “It depends.” Such uncertainty about the identity of the individual or group so named, which accompanies nearly every use of the word in Greco-Roman antiquity, reflects the relative poles of the spectrum of potential interpretation. Thracological analyses (e.g., Fol and Marazov 1977, 139; cf. [Chapter 1](#)) could regard the Thracians as essentially settled in the southeastern Balkans as early as the Late Bronze Age and persisting there through Late Antiquity, until a period of intermarriage and cultural exchange with new settlers in the region in the early medieval period. In this model, Thracians remain a proto-national, ethno-cultural entity throughout Greco-Roman antiquity. Much recent scholarship stands at a distance from such interpretations and has proposed a minimalist understanding of “Thracian”: it is not an ethnic term, but chiefly

geographic and used by outsiders (and by “Thracians” who find themselves outside of Thrace) that may on occasion be extended to recognize basic cultural affiliation among ethnē in the eastern Balkans. This productive development mirrors evolving perceptions of other “mass” groups chiefly known through the material record or outsider literary sources, like the Celts (cf. [Chapter 24](#)), Illyrians, or Scythians, and has helped to draw greater attention to the types of regional variation in material culture and local identity throughout Thrace discussed above in [sections 3.2](#) and [3.3](#). Evidence from a city like Classical Athens, however, suggests that, between Thracians as spiritual, if not genetic, ancestors of modern Balkan nations (e.g., Zhivkova 1982, 60) and Thracians as existing solely in the imagination of a Herodotus or Thucydides, there is a quite substantial middle ground that may be explored concerning the valence of the word and the identity of those so designated.

I begin with two roughly contemporary inscribed monuments from the city. The first, the so-called Attic stelai dated to 414 that record state seizures of the property of the Hermokopidai, contains regular mention of Thracian slaves; one Kephisodoros, for example, a metic, had at least 16 slaves confiscated, among whom are numbered prominently five “Thracians” (three women, two men) (IG I³ 421, ll. 33–49). The second is an Athenian decree of 386/5 that awards honors to Hebryzelmis, “king of the Odrysians” (IG II² 31).⁶ To the extent that such a discrepancy commands an explanation, one may simply point to the divergent content of the two inscriptions. Thracian in the Attic stelai may simply indicate broad geographical point of origin and thus fall into the category of “regional” ethnic (see Fraser 2009, 119–145), while Hebryzelmis’ role as political actor helps to explain this more detailed epithet. At the same time, the clear status distinction between these individuals – slaves in one document, a king in the other – merits further discussion.

In his brief Thracian logos, Herodotus states that the Thracians worship Dionysus, Ares, and Artemis, while their kings alone worship Hermes, swear oaths by him, and even claim descent from him (for fuller discussion of the passage, see [Chapter 29](#)). Since Thrace was populated by a range of political entities, many of which had kings, one would like to know in particular which kings Herodotus meant. Given the growing power and coherence of the Odrysians over the course of the fifth century, one might assume on good grounds that Herodotus has generalized from their specific example, but there are other possibilities, such as, for example, those other Thracian ethnē specifically mentioned by Herodotus and about which he seems to possess some more definite knowledge, like the Getae. The key point is that Herodotus was aware of a discourse that distinguished the Thracians from their kings by means of arguments about descent that were reinforced through both the swearing of oaths (such a critical mechanism of Thracian diplomacy in the Classical and Hellenistic period) by the divine progenitor and performance of cult in his honor, which was restricted to the kings themselves

and probably a network of close kin. Of the descent of those to whom the kings are implicitly compared, their subjects the Thracians, there is no comparable claim recorded in Herodotus.

Divergent claims of descent begin to move us in the direction of some traditional definitions of ethnicity. It is worth comparing, for example, the Argead kings of Macedon who seem to have claimed heroic (Greek) descent distinct from their Macedonian subjects, although the matter was as contested in antiquity as it is by scholars today (e.g., Hall 2001, 167–169). Similar arguments are well known from elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean and southwest Asia in antiquity; comparative studies have documented that such claims often emerge in the context of state formation and could be used to legitimize elite rule and the exercise of royal privilege (e.g., tribute, access to natural resources, status expression; cf. Hall 1997, 26–28). In the wake of the Persian withdrawal from Europe, elites in Europe seem to have developed new modes of expressing their status, which reflects in most cases their increased power. Such trends are visible throughout the central and eastern Balkans, above all in Thrace (Archibald 2006, 124–127), where the material record (e.g., Duvanli cemetery: cf. [Chapters 12](#) and [14](#)) heralds the emergence and new power of just such an elite. While it is traditional to see these elites as modeling themselves, with local flair to be sure, on neighboring elites in Anatolia and the northern Aegean, it must equally be the case that these elites were actively distinguishing themselves from other populations within Thrace.

In sum, such evidence is suggestive of a context wherein an ethnic discourse might appear and be driven by a process of internal opposition or differentiation (Hall 1997, 32). Reading Herodotus' testimony in conjunction with the archaeological record, we can infer that some of these elites, "Odrysian" or other, made claims to descent distinct from that of other Thracians. Such claims open the possibility that an ethnic discourse was utilized by these elites to justify this expression of their new status and prerogatives. This discourse appears rooted in existing tribal identities which may have furnished a basis for a shared territorial claim. The non-elite, intra-population "other" on this reading would conceivably be "Thracians," an identity that may have been imposed from above or generated from below and in any case made accessible to the subjects of these elites. And it is in this light, I would suggest, that the Athenian monuments with which this section began can be read.

Athenian evidence can again begin to put a finer point on this discussion, for Odrysian royals appear adept at those games of kinship diplomacy that often seem to accompany ethnic arguments. In Xenophon's *Anabasis*, for example, Seuthes II can mention his kinship (*sungeneia*) with the Athenians (7.2.31, 3.39), apparently referring to a tradition of a relationship between Athens and the mythical Thracian king Tereus, who, with an Athenian woman, was the

alleged progenitor of Teres, the first representative of the Odrysian royal family. Contemporary Athenian literary sources paint Tereus in a barbarous light (e.g., Sophocles' *Tereus* (fr. 581–595b Radt)) and Thucydides' curious protestations that the Tereus of legend had no relation to the Odrysians only serve to confirm that precisely such a story was in circulation in the later fifth century (2.29.3). Thucydides' mythological digression, the sole such passage in the entire history, occurs in the context of his discussion of the mediation between the Odrysians and the Athenians performed by Nymphodoros of Abdera, Sitalkes' brother-in-law and proxenos of the Athenians. C. P. Jones has plausibly suggested that Nymphodoros may have adduced the myth as a legendary precedent for an Athenian-Odrysian alliance (1999, 30). The audience for such an argument is regularly regarded as Athenian, but it is equally possible that such stories were influential among the Odrysians as well; nor is there any reason to assume that the negative version of the Tereus myth was the only such version in circulation. Seuthes may therefore refer to a different version of the story or a different story altogether, upon which such an assertion of kinship could be predicated. Given the long history of mutual exchange and influence among Thracians and Greeks, it would not be at all surprising if there were a host of such stories in circulation that could be selectively deployed when occasion arose.

Given how deeply reliant on non-Thracian sources discussion in this section has been, it is fortuitous that a recently discovered inscription from inland Thrace preserves what appear to be a Thracian use of the word “Thracian.” The so-called “Pistiros Inscription” discovered near the substantial remains of a settlement at Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa near Vetren in the upper Maritsa valley (often identified, not uncontroversially, with the Pistiros mentioned in the inscription), is concerned with the activity of Greek merchants within a network of emporia, among which Pistiros is prominent (Chankowski and Domaradzka 1999 (SEG 49.911)). The document, typically dated ca. 359–339 on the basis of prosopography and political context, is often thought to emanate from the Odrysian chancellery and associated with one of Kotys I's successors (for rich discussion of the inscription, including a useful overview of the scholarship, see Demetriou 2012, 153–187). Among the several completely preserved regulations is the following: “Whatever is owed to the traders by the Thracians, let him [an Odrysian administrator or the king himself] not affect a cancellation of those debts” (ll. 7–10). Thracians here are opposed on the one hand to Greek merchants who reside in or are in transit through the emporion and, on the other, to the presumably royal, Odrysian issuing authority. A useful comparandum is furnished by the fragmentary arrangements of Alexander III “the Great” concerning Philippi; while the text has been aggressively restored, it appears that the rights of “Thracians” to till (royal?) land, which had previously been granted by Philip II and subsequently disputed by the citizens of Philippi, are reconfirmed by Alexander (Hatzopoulos 1996, 25–28, no. 6: Thracians are clearly present at

II, 1. 3; cf. Pilhofer 2009, no. 160a). In epigraphic perspective, the posture of the Argead king toward his Thracian subjects appears identical to that of his Odrysian predecessor.

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Guide to Further Reading

Tomaschek, Wilhelm W. 1893. *Die Alten Thraker, I: Eine ethnologische Untersuchung* (Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Classe der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften 128, IV. Abhandlung). Vienna: F. Tempsky. An essential early study of the Thracian ethne.

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Delev, Peter. 2007. "The Edonians." *Thracia*, 17: 85–106. A model study (in English) of an important Thracian ethnos.

Delev, Peter. 2014. *Istoria na plemenata v jugozapadna Trakia prez I khil. pr. Khr.* Sofia. Important study of tribal geography in southwestern Thrace on the border with Macedonia.

McInerney, Jeremy, ed. 2014. *A Companion to Ethnicity in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. An important, recent collection of essays illustrating diverse approaches to the study of ethnicity in the ancient Mediterranean.

Notes

- 1 All ancient dates BCE unless otherwise noted.
- 2 For a recent summary of the status questionis, with ample reference to the earlier scholarship on Thracian tribes, see Theodossiev 2011, 6–10.
- 3 The most conspicuous examples of the political salience of Thracian ethne reflected in the material record remain the stunning coinages issued in the name of various ethne (or their kings) in southeastern Thrace, dated from the late sixth century to ca. 460. Cf. Chapter 18; Youroukova 1976.
- 4 Herodotus is of course keen to comment on emblematic practices of individual Thracian ethne: see, e.g., 5.4–5, where the Getai, Trausi, and "those above the Krestonians" (hoi de katuperthe Krestonaion) are distinguished from the rest of the Thracians by virtue of their unusual (in Thracian context) attitudes and behaviors. For Herodotus' interest in such peculiarities, see Chapter 25. On the Getai and immortality, see Chapter

- 5 For the alleged Late Antique translation of the Bible into the Bessian language, mentioned by both Paulinus of Nola and Jerome, see Chapter 8.
- 6 A slightly later, fragmentary inscription from 356 recording an alliance between the Athens and host of northern kings (IG II² 127), including Ketriporis, one of the successors of Kotys I, has traditionally been restored “Ketriporis the Thracian” (Ketripor[in ton Thraika); “Ketriporis the Odrysian” (Ketripor[in ton Odruse) is equally satisfactory and fits the stoichedon.

Part II
History

Chapter 4

Early History of Thrace to the Murder of Kotys I (360 BCE)

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As we have seen, the ancient Thracians had no literature, not even a script – neither do we know of any Greek or Latin author who wrote about Thracian history. If we wish to obtain some information about the ancient Thracians and their history, we are dependent, on the one hand, on the archaeological remains and the coins and, on the other, on the accounts of Greek authors. Since the archaeological and the numismatic evidence will be dealt with in separate chapters of this *Companion*, the following outline of the history of Thrace up to the murder of king Kotys will be based mainly on literary sources, essentially on the works of historians, biographers, and Attic orators. These authors, however, spoke about Thrace almost entirely in the context of warlike or peaceful contacts, either with the different great Greek powers (Athens, Sparta, Macedon) or with the Greek cities on the coasts of Thrace. In addition, this information, which is in itself limited, is for the most part confined to the north coast of the Aegean and the area of the Straits including the Propontis, whereas we hear much less about the Greek cities on the Black Sea coast or even about the tribes in the interior.

4.1 Greek Colonization

In the *Iliad* inhabitants of the Thracian south coast are repeatedly mentioned as allies of the Trojans, coming from three different regions: the Thracian Chersonese and its hinterland, at least up to Ainos at the mouth of the Hebros River; the area of the Kikones about Ismaros; and in the west, the Paionians who lived on the “wide-flowing Axios.”¹ But Thrace was the home not only of Trojan allies but also of the wine that was sent to Agamemnon, of swords, and of precious cups.² Last but not least, the poet speaks of the western extension of Thrace, when he sends the goddess Hera from Olympos over the plains of Pieria and Emathia (later lower Macedonia west of the Axios) and over the snowy mountains of the Thracian horsemen to Athos (14.225–229).

According to this itinerary the Chalcidic Peninsula, which extends southeast of the Axios River into the Aegean, was in those days a part of Thrace, and here the first Greek colonies in the north were founded. The written record of these events, which in the course of time included all coasts of Thrace, is late, incomplete, and rarely reliable with respect to chronology; in this instance more than for other periods of Thracian history we depend on the

archaeological evidence. Recent excavations have shown that several centuries before the great Greek colonization Euboians arrived in the north of the Aegean and settled permanently, evidently in Mende on the Pallene, the westernmost of the three peninsular extensions of the great Chalcidic Peninsula, and in Torone on the Sithonia, the central of those same three extensions. In the eighth century Euboians again headed for the Chalcidic Peninsula and founded colonies, the Eretrians on the Pallene and the Chalcidians on the Sithonia and in its hinterland.³ About the middle of the seventh century Andrians turned up on the east coast of the peninsula and founded four colonies between the isthmus of the Akte and the mouth of the Strymon River: Sane, Akanthos, Stagira, and Argilos. Finally, about the year 600, the Corinthians founded Poteidaia on the isthmus of the Pallene.

Very successful colonizers were the inhabitants of the island of Paros, who, in the first half of the seventh century, took possession of the island of Thasos, which was very fertile and had many mineral resources (Tiverios 2008, 72–91). About one generation later new settlers arrived and before the end of the seventh century the Thasians had occupied the mainland opposite and established several colonies and trading centers between the Strymon and Nestos Rivers; one of these was Neapolis, modern Kavala, with its important harbor. East of the Nestos up to Lake Bistonis there spread a fertile plain, where about the middle of the seventh century the Klazomenians from Asia Minor founded Abdera (Isaac 1986, 73–89; Tiverios 2008, 91–99). The beginnings of this colony were not very promising; about one hundred years after its founding, however, the city was strengthened by refugees from Asia Minor and very soon became one of the most important economic, military, and cultural centers of the northern Aegean.

Southeast of Lake Bistonis lay Dikaia, whose mother city and date of founding are unknown and whose archaeological remains are not older than the second half of the sixth century. The same is true of the colony, once situated further east on the peninsula of Molyvoti, which was mostly identified with the Thasian colony of Stryme. In 2008, however, L. D. Loukopoulou and S. Psoma were able to show that the remains on Molyvoti have to be identified with Archaic and Classical Maroneia, which had been founded by the Chians; only much later was the colony transferred further east to the foot of Mount Ismaros (Loukopoulou and Psoma 2008). In the south, this mountain ends in a cape that projects into the sea; beyond this cape there is another plain that slowly widens and stretches east to the Hebros River; off the plain lies the island of Samothrake. About or after 700, Aioliens who came from Lesbos occupied Samothrake and used it as a starting point for the founding of several settlements on the opposite shore.⁴ Probably in the second half of the seventh century Ainos, which lies at the mouth of the Hebros and had already been mentioned in the *Iliad*, received new Aiolian settlers (Isaac 1986, 140–148; Tiverios 2008, 118–121). The later importance of the colony

can be attributed to its harbor and its location at the end of communication and transport routes descending to the Aegean coast from the Thracian interior; at first, however, Ainos, like all the other colonies in the northern Aegean, was probably founded with the aim of feeding an ever increasing population.

The next destination of Greek colonists was the Thracian Chersonese, but our written sources do not supply any information about the first settlements in that area and until now archaeological finds and investigations have been meager. Most scholars date the start of the colonization to the seventh century (Tzvetkova 2000–2001). The following colonies and their metropoleis are attested. The first to come seem to have been the Aiolians; they occupied Madytos and Sestos, which lay on the strait, and Alopekonnesos on the northwest coast of the peninsula; from here they reached Ainos in the second half of the century. On the west coast the Milesians founded, partly together with the Klazomenians, Limnai and Kardia. Whether Elaious, which lay on the southwestern tip of the Chersonese, was an Athenian colony is disputed. By the end of the seventh century, though, the Athenians were interested in this area, when they occupied Sigeion, which lay on Asiatic soil south of the entrance to the Hellespont. Some decades later the Athenian Miltiades took colonists to the Chersonese, installed them in already existing cities or in new foundations, protected the inhabitants of the peninsula by building a wall across its isthmus, and established a private rule which became hereditary within the family and was only abolished by the Persians after the suppression of the Ionian Revolt.

The Chersonese was attractive on account of the fertility of its soil; at the same time it gave access to the Propontis and to the Pontos Euxeinos (mod. Black Sea), which extended farther northeast and whose shores very soon also attracted Greek settlers. The evidence for the colonization of the coasts of the Propontis is likewise poor: we know most of the metropoleis, but not the exact foundation dates of the colonies that they founded. On the whole, there are three groups of colonies: on the south coast Milesian foundations (Kyzikos, Prokonnesos, Kios, and perhaps others); in the northeastern and northern part of the Propontis, Megarian foundations (Astakos, Chalkedon, Byzantion, Selymbria); and, the latest, on the north coast the Samian foundations Perinthos and Bisanthe, where the colonists seem to have met the strongest opposition from the native population.

Even if most of the Greek cities on the west coast of the Black Sea are built over today and cannot be explored systematically, chance finds and archaeological investigations conducted during the last decades have furnished sufficient information to allow us to reconstruct the course of the colonization of this region (Avram, Hind, and Tsetschladze 2004). Already before founding colonies in this area Greeks had visited the coasts of the Black Sea, and the poet Hesiod (Theog. 339) mentioned the Istros River

(mod. Danube). To the south of its mouth the Milesians in about 630 founded Histria, the oldest colony on this coast; before the turn of the century Apollonia (now Sozopol), the most southern settlement, followed. Also in the ensuing years the colonization of the Black Sea area was clearly determined by the Milesians and reflects their problems first with their Lydian, then with their Persian neighbors: Already existing colonies received additional settlers; Tomis (now Constanza) and Odessos (now Varna) came into being in the first half of the sixth century. The Megarians appeared at about the end of the same century and founded Mesambria (now Nesebar) between Odessos and Apollonia.

4.2 The Persian Invasions

Only in very few cases can we guess how the different Thracian tribes reacted to the occupation of their coasts by the Greek colonists; and, as far as our written sources are concerned, we do not learn anything about their political history in the age of the great colonization. This, however, changed abruptly when, at the end of the sixth century, the Persians appeared on European soil and for more than three decades determined the history of this area, and when some decades later the Greek historian Herodotus wrote his history of the Persian Wars, in which he also mentioned events in Thrace, although not as fully as we would wish.⁵ According to him (4.83–144), the Great King Dareios was the first to cross to Thrace with his troops. A recent critical examination of this account, however, leads to the supposition that already before Dareios the general Megabazos had made an advance across the Straits and had conquered the territory along the Hellespont and the Propontis (Boteva 2011, 738–749). This could only have been a prelude to further conquests on European soil, and, in order to safeguard these against possible raids of the Skythians who lived north of the Danube, in about 513 Dareios himself arrived with a great army, crossed the Bosphoros, conquered further tribes in eastern Thrace, marched to the mouth of the Danube and crossed the river. After having operated – allegedly unsuccessfully – for some time in the area of the Skythians he led his army back down the Hebros River, built a fort called Doriskos west of its mouth and returned via Sestos to Asia Minor.

Megabazos' and Dareios' conquests in Thrace seem to have comprised only the Black Sea coast and its immediate hinterland and the south coast between the Hellespont and Doriskos. But even these territories were by no means entirely subjugated and we are told that in the region of the Straits the general Megabazos, who had been left behind on European soil, attacked cities that had not submitted to the Persians (Hdt. 4.144.3; 5.1.1). About 510 he marched west along the Thracian coast of the Aegean and conquered all tribes and cities until he reached the area of the lower Strymon. Some of the Paionian tribes in this region were deported to Asia Minor, and a diplomatic mission achieved the voluntary submission of the Macedonian king Amyntas. While

Amyntas was obviously allowed to continue ruling, albeit as a vassal of the Great King, we do not know anything about the organization of the parts of Thrace that the Persians had conquered up to that time. These were restricted to the coastal areas and did not comprise, as some scholars assume, the big central plain in modern Bulgaria. After the occupation of the region of the lower Strymon the Great King gave the Milesian tyrant Histiaios for his loyalty during the Skythian campaign permission to found a city at Myrkinos, north of later Amphipolis; after a while, however, Histiaios was recalled at the instigation of Megabazos. In the area of the Straits there was still trouble, and Otanes, the successor of Megabazos, had to conquer not only Byzantion and Chalkedon but also the islands of Lemnos and Imbros, which lie offshore of the Hellespont (Hdt. 5.2–27).

If the conquest of the Straits and the south coast of Thrace as well as the extension of Persian rule to Macedonia was intended as the preparation for a campaign against Greece, nothing in fact happened in this respect, at least during the next ten years. Quite the opposite: the Persian rule in this region was so weak that in the years of the Ionian Revolt (499–494) it practically collapsed. Such a conclusion can be drawn from the following information (Zahrnt 1992, 250–252). The Paionians whom Megabazos had deported to Asia Minor returned to their home via Doriskos. A little later Byzantion, as well as all cities on the Propontis and on the Hellespont, broke away from the King; as a result, the Persian Empire temporarily lacked direct lines of supply and communications to its possessions on European soil. The younger Miltiades, who resided on the Thracian Chersonese, made the most of this situation and seized the island of Lemnos, while a little later the Skythians crossed the Danube, advanced to the Chersonese and expelled Miltiades temporarily; the Skythians may also have been responsible for the devastations which have been observed in Histria and which can be dated to the years around 500. In 497 or 496 Aristagoras, the leader of the Ionian Revolt, fled from Miletos and went to Myrkinos on the lower Strymon but was killed by the locals when he attacked one of their cities. When the Persians had quelled the revolt in Asia Minor and turned against the rebels on the Straits, the inhabitants of Byzantion and Chalkedon escaped to Mesambria, while Miltiades left the Chersonese in a hurry.

Finally, in 492, Dareios dispatched his son-in-law Mardonios with an army and a fleet and ordered him to restore Persian rule on the other side of the Straits as well (Hdt. 6.43–45; Zahrnt 1992, 238–244). Although the Persian navy was shipwrecked while rounding the Athos peninsula and the locals successfully attacked the land army, killed many soldiers, and even injured the general, the campaign ended with a Persian success. In connection with the events of the year 480 Herodotos (7.106) speaks of the numerous commanders in Thrace and at the Hellespont; these might have been appointed subsequent to Mardonios' campaign. On the other hand we never

hear of a satrap who resided in Thrace, and therefore most scholars are convinced that the Persians had not set up a separate satrapy but that the country consisted of different military districts which were governed by the previously mentioned commanders; these were possibly subordinate to the satrap who resided in Sardeis.

Afterward, owing to Mardonios' successes, Thrace remained firmly under Persian control until the year 480, as can be observed during the preparations for Xerxes' invasion of Greece. In order to avoid another shipwreck a canal was built across the isthmus of the Athos peninsula; its traces are still visible on the ground (Isserlin 2003). Furthermore, in the region where Amphipolis would later be founded, the Strymon was bridged and supply depots for the army were laid out in Thrace and Macedonia along the route of the planned advance (Hdt. 7.22–25). Finally, the shores of the Hellespont were connected by two bridges (Hdt. 7.33–36). In the early summer of 480, Xerxes led his troops over these bridges into Europe and through Thrace to Macedonian Therme, in the area of modern Thessaloniki; all tribes and Greek cities on the route of the army had to supply soldiers or ships, and sometimes both. According to Herodotos, the army marched from Doriskos to Therme in three separate columns; the respective routes are much discussed and will certainly remain so.⁶ We can be sure, however, that the territories through which the army passed were firmly under Persian control.

Such circumstances, however, changed during the course of Xerxes' invasion. After being defeated at the battle of Salamis, the King hurriedly marched to the Hellespont with select troops; during this march many soldiers are said to have been killed by famine or disease (Hdt. 8.115–120). When the remnants of this escort, who were on their way back to rejoin the main army which was encamped in Macedonia, reached the Chalcidic Peninsula, they had to proceed against the cities of the Pallene, which had defected, and against the Bottiaians, who lived in Olynthos (Hdt. 8.126–129). This city could be captured, but not those on the Pallene; rather, next year (479) the Poteidaians took part in the battle of Plataiai and fought on the side of the Greeks. After the Persian defeat in the battle, the survivors of the Persian army marched in great hurry through Thessaly and Macedonia and eventually reached Byzantion, after many of them had either been killed by the Thracians or had been worn out by famine and exhaustion (Hdt. 9.89). That the Persians had to make a detour via the Bosporos can be explained by the events that were happening simultaneously in the area of the Hellespont: after the Greek fleet had totally destroyed the last Persian ships at the cape of Mykale, it sailed to the north and, after a lengthy siege, captured the city of Sestos and won the crossing of the Hellespont (Hdt. 9.114–121).

4.3 Delian League and Peloponnesian War

During the next decades our knowledge of the history of Thrace is determined in the main by the activities of the Athenians and their ambitions in the north. Apart from the Athenian Tribute List, some other inscriptions, and scattered notes in the literary tradition, our main source is the work of Thucydides, whose outline of the history between the end of the Persian Wars and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (431) is, however, disappointingly short.⁷ Soon after Xerxes' invasion was repulsed, the Athenians founded and headed the so-called Delian League, which, as we shall soon see, after only a few years degenerated into an Athenian Empire. The aim of the first operations of the League was to expel the Persians from Thrace (Hdt. 7.106). Details are known only for Doriskos and Eion, which was situated east of the mouth of the Strymon River. This fort had already been captured by 476 and became a base of the Athenians, from which they might have tried for the first time, although unsuccessfully, to establish themselves in the region of later Amphipolis (Thuc. 1.98.1; Plut. Kim. 7.1–3). Doriskos, however, could repulse all Athenian attacks; it surrendered eventually to the Thracians and never became a member of the League, which, in Aegean Thrace, finally comprised the coastal cities from the Chalcidic Peninsula to the mouth of the Hebros River. Unfortunately, our sources do not allow us to assess the number of the members of the League in the first years of its existence. We may assume, however, that the Athenians had aimed early on to achieve as complete a control as possible of the Thracian coast, if only to prevent a renewed Persian attack along this route. Many cities on this coast may also have been interested in finding shelter in the League as soon as possible. East of the Hebros, however, the opposition of the Thracians who lived on this coast and in its hinterland resulted in a smaller number of League members from this part of Thrace. With the backing of the Thracians, some Persians were able to maintain their position on the Thracian Chersonese until the 460 s; only then were they driven out by the Athenians and the cities of the peninsula incorporated into the League (Plut. Kim. 14.1).

Immediately afterward (about 465) the Thasians revolted because of a quarrel with the Athenians about their trading posts and mines on the Thracian mainland opposite their island (Thuc. 1.100–101; Diod. 11.70; Plut. Kim. 14.2–3). The Athenians might have wanted to exploit these mines themselves and to transform the Thasian colonies on the mainland into tribute-paying members of their league. The Thasians lost a sea battle and after a siege of two years had to capitulate, pull down their fortifications, deliver their ships, pay tribute, and give up both the mainland and the mines; the Thasian colonies of Neapolis and Galepsos became members of the League.

While their navy was deployed against the Thasians, the Athenians sent 10,000 settlers to the lower Strymon in order to colonize *Ennea hodoi*, the later Amphipolis, which was in the possession of the native Edonians. The enterprise succeeded, but when 12 years later the colonists tried to advance

into the interior they suffered a terrible defeat near modern Drama; that was also the end of the colony (Badian 1993, 81–86, 106–107). Perikles was more successful when in 447 he took 1000 colonists to the Thracian Chersonese and built a wall across the isthmus of the peninsula in order to stop the invasions of the neighboring Thracians (Plut. Per. 11.5, 19.1). Eventually in 437 the Athenians managed – in cooperation with other cities – to found the colony of Amphipolis near the mouth of the Strymon River (Thuc. 4.102.2–4; Diod.12.32.3). The city was situated on a conspicuous hill which rises ca. 140 m above the plain and is protected by the river on three sides. It controlled not only the single crossing of the Strymon and the routes from west to east (and vice versa) but also the access to the interior with its immense supply of timber and its gold and silver mines.

The retreat of the Persians from Thrace opened the way for the Odrysians whose homelands were to be looked for in the fertile valleys of the Hebros (mod. Maritsa), Tonzos (Tundja), and Harpessos (Arda) Rivers. According to Thucydides (2.29.2) their king Teres “was the first to found a great kingdom of the Odrysians, which extended over the larger part of Thrace.” Details about the formation and the extension of this realm are barely known, nor can these events be dated exactly. Some of the territorial gains may even have been made by Teres’ son Sitalkes. We only know that Teres was on friendly terms with the Skythians, that he had given his daughter in marriage to a Skythian ruler, that he had suffered a defeat in the hinterland of the Propontis when he was attacked by the Thynians, and that allegedly he reached the age of 92. At the beginning of the Peloponnesian War his son Sitalkes ruled over the Odrysians. In our literary sources Sitalkes’ brother Sparadokos is attested only as the father of Seuthes who was to become Sitalkes’ successor. He was, however, the first Odrysian ruler to mint silver coins, but these coins do not provide an unambiguous answer to the question of whether Sparadokos was Sitalkes’ predecessor or had only governed a principality under the sovereignty of his brother. The date of these coins and the location of such a principality (either in the southwest of the Odrysian kingdom or probably in the hinterland of Ainos) are also disputed.⁸

By far the most information about Sitalkes concerns the first years of the Peloponnesian War and comes from Thucydides who maintained close relations with Thrace, where he not only had the right of working gold mines but also exerted great influence on leading individuals (4.105.1). Additionally Herodotos (4.80) knew of a meeting between Sitalkes and the Skythian ruler who was the son of the daughter of Teres and who had ousted his brother, the actual ruler; Herodotos’ account is vague about the chronology of this event, unfortunately. The deposed ruler had gone to Sitalkes, whereas a brother of Sitalkes (might he have been Sparadokos?) had found shelter with the Skythians. Instead of bringing back their protégés by force of arms the two rulers mutually handed them over. So both Sitalkes’ rule and the northern

frontier of his kingdom were protected. As regards the Athenians and their allies, he protected himself with the help of an alliance that had been negotiated in the summer of 431 by Nymphodoros of Abdera, whose sister Sitalkes had married; on this occasion Sitalkes' son Sadokos became an Athenian citizen, probably the first Thracian to be honored in this way (Thuc. 2.29). In the following summer of 430, Sitalkes and his son Sadokos demonstrated their loyalty to the Athenians by arresting and delivering up a group of Peloponnesian envoys who were on their way to the Persian King and had tried to bring the Odrysians over to the Spartan side (Thuc. 2.67; cf. Hdt. 7.137).

Sitalkes had promised the Athenians that he would assist them against the Macedonian king Perdikkas and the insurgents on the Chalcidic Peninsula. In the winter of 429/8 he set off against both of them. Although this campaign was only marginally relevant to the history of the Peloponnesian War and achieved no lasting success, Thucydides not only supplied a detailed report but also inserted a substantial digression on Sitalkes' kingdom, its size, the king's sources of revenue, and the army (2.95–101). His enumeration and description of the tribes that supplied troops for Sitalkes' campaign against Macedonia are the most detailed account we have of the extent of the Thracian realm in the fifth century. Thucydides begins with the Odrysian homelands, without specifying their whereabouts, although they must have been located around the middle course of the Hebros River in southeastern Bulgaria; this gave the Odrysians not only an economic and strategic advantage but also access to the Thracian interior and to the coasts to the east and south. He then writes of the Thracians living between Haimos (now the Balkan Mountains, Stara Planina), Rhodope, and the sea (both the Pontos Euxeinos and the Propontis), and of the Getai and other tribes between the Istros (Danube) and Haimos. In addition to these different Thracians living chiefly in the plains of what are now Bulgaria and Greek and Turkish Thrace, Sitalkes also summoned the independent Thracians who lived in the mountains, most of them inhabitants of Rhodope in what is now southwestern Bulgaria. From here Thucydides moves to present-day western Bulgaria, mentioning the Agrianians and other Paionian tribes who were under Sitalkes' sway, the Strymon River having been the western boundary of his empire. The Paionians west of the river were independent but seem to have been the target of an earlier expedition of Sitalkes; on that occasion he had even constructed a road, cutting a path through the forest. To the northwest the boundary was formed by the tribes who lived north of Mount Skombros (now Vitosha south of Sofia), east of the Oskios River (mod. Iskar), and south of the independent Triballoi.

After this digression Thucydides describes the march of Sitalkes' army through the interior of Thrace to the north of Macedonia and the invasion along the Axios. During this march many of the independent Thracians joined

him without being summoned, so that the whole number of troops was said to have risen to no fewer than 150,000, of whom about a third were cavalry. Despite their numerical superiority the Thracians did not advance any further into Macedonia than Pella and Kyrrhos. Instead they ravaged the eastern parts of Macedonia and the adjacent areas of the Bottiaeans and the Chalcidians, frightening both the Greeks living to the south of Macedonia and the independent Thracians east of the lower Strymon. However, the Thracian army did not have sufficient food supplies and was also suffering from the cold; so Sitalkes returned home after just 30 days, taking the advice of his nephew Seuthes, who had himself been bribed by Perdikkas. In 424 Sitalkes undertook an expedition against the Triballoi but was defeated in battle and killed; after his death his nephew Seuthes became king of the Odrysians and of the rest of Sitalkes' Thracian realm (Thuc. 5.101.5).

This realm had been created partly by voluntary subordination under the Odrysian ruler whose power grew continually, partly by fighting. Some tribes were allowed to keep their leaders, in other parts so-called paradynasts were appointed as governors; some of these are known only from their coins which, however, must not be interpreted as an indication of independence movements or even rebellions. A capital of the Odrysian realm is never mentioned; the respective rulers seem to have stayed in different more or less fortified settlements or other central places.

Thucydides speaks with admiration about the size of the Odrysian realm which extended from Abdera to the Danube or from Byzantion to the Strymon (2.97.1–2); this made it larger than all Greek states south of Macedonia and Epeiros. Furthermore he emphasizes the income of the Odrysian king, which under Sitalkes' successor Seuthes had amounted in gold and silver to about 400 talents; to this sum must be added gifts in gold and silver and other precious materials whose worth reached the same sum. Such gifts were given not only to the ruler but also to the subordinate princes and nobles of the Odrysians (2.97.3). The geographic limits of the tributary members of the Odrysian realm must remain disputed, since the decisive sentence of Thucydides' text is corrupt; some certainty can be achieved only for the cities on the Aegean coast. Chr. Veligianni has shown that the cities of Abdera, Maroneia, and Ainos were never part of the Odrysian realm, while Z. H. Archibald, because of the textual problem in Thucydides, avoids an exact definition of the obligations of the Greek cities. L. D. Loukopoulou has recently suggested a convincing solution to the problem: the Greek cities did not belong to the Odrysian realm but had to pay taxes if they traded within that realm. In fact, already in the first half of the fifth century Greek traders were busy in the valley of the Hebros River, and the emporion Pistiros, which is situated in this area and has meanwhile been thoroughly investigated, had come into being in the early years of the Odrysian realm.⁹ Such payments by traders did not impair the hegemony of Greek cities on the fringes of the

realm, but rather filled the coffers of the Odrysian ruler.

Under Seuthes I, the son of Sparadokos, the Odrysian realm was able to maintain its position, and the income of the ruler could even be increased, but our sources seem to indicate that political and military activities decreased. In the years 424/3 and 422, Seuthes obviously did not take part in the clashes between Athenians and the Spartan Brasidas over the possession of Amphipolis, whereas Thracian tribes in the area of the lower Strymon supported one or the other of the parties; the Edonians of Myrkinos sided with the Spartans (Thuc. 4.107.9; 5.6.4), while the Odomantian king, Polles, aided the Athenian general Kleon (5.6.2). During the rule of Sitalkes these tribes had been independent and obviously they seem to have maintained their independence. Likewise in the course of later Athenian actions along the Thracian coast, Seuthes is not mentioned. In these years the Athenians not only failed to recover Amphipolis, but also, in the second half of the Peloponnesian War, temporarily lost to the Spartans other important cities such as Byzantion, Selymbria, Perinthos, and Abdera. We do not know whether Seuthes made use of this situation and whether he, as many scholars assume, began at this time to expand his rule toward the Chersonese. The sources are silent about his later years, including the time of his death.

His successor Medokos is mentioned for the first time in 405, when the Athenian Alkibiades told the Athenian generals, who were encamped at Aigospotamoi on the Chersonese, that the Thracian kings Medokos and Seuthes (II) were his friends and had promised him considerable troops for the fight against the Spartans (Diod. 13.105.3). Some years earlier in the course of his military operations around the Hellespont and the Propontis, Alkibiades had seized some strongholds near Bisanthe and on the Thracian Chersonese. When he had to flee again from Athens, he withdrew there. Our sources tell us that he enlisted mercenaries, waged war on the Thracians who had no king at the time, captured much booty and gave the Greeks in this region safety with respect to the barbarians; that means that in the hinterland of the Propontis there were districts which were not part of any kingdom.¹⁰ When a little later Alkibiades fled to Asia Minor and the threats from the Thracians did not cease, the Byzantines turned to the Spartans and asked for help. The Spartans sent Klearchos, who set up a tyranny until he was expelled; however, he stayed in the country and went on fighting the Thracians until in 401 he joined the campaign of the younger Kyros against his brother Artaxerxes.¹¹

4.4 After the Peloponnesian War

These events seem to indicate that – perhaps already in Seuthes' last years – the rule of the central authority had been weakened and as a result tendencies toward a fragmentation of the realm became apparent. About the end of the fifth century this development becomes visible in the work of Xenophon, our

next Greek historian who had occasion to talk about conditions and events in Thrace. In the winter of 400/399, this Athenian mercenary commander arrived in Byzantion with the remnants of a once 10,000-strong force of Greek mercenaries and, after some hesitation, entered Seuthes II's service. Seuthes' father Maisades had – probably during Seuthes I's lifetime – been appointed ruler of three tribes that lived in the hinterland of the Propontis and the Black Sea (a strategically important region in southeastern Thrace), but had been expelled after some time and died soon afterward. His son Seuthes had been brought up in the house of Medokos, who eventually gave him an army so that he could take revenge on those who had expelled his father and win back his father's rule. In the next years, he undertook several raids into his father's former territory; as his offer to Alkibiades shows, he had achieved some power by 405. Another local ruler was Teres in the hinterland of Byzantion, who is virtually unknown, whereas we owe to Xenophon's *Anabasis* much information about his employer, Seuthes II, and the conditions in Thrace at the time.¹² According to Xenophon, Seuthes already controlled a number of fortresses along the coast and in the hinterland, from which he undertook raids into the territory of the rebels, but had not yet succeeded in subjugating them. With the help of the Greek mercenaries, he campaigned not only in the former territory of his father but also in the principality of Teres; in doing so he had no moral scruples and butchered unmercifully those whom he actually wanted to become his subjects. After a number of successes which led him up to Salmydessos on the Black Sea coast, Xenophon with his mercenaries left Seuthes and entered the service of the Spartans, who were the decisive power in the area of the Straits after the end of the Peloponnesian War and who, since the year 400, had waged war on the Persian satrap Tissaphernes; Seuthes was glad to be rid of the Greeks, whom he had scarcely paid.

With Xenophon's help Seuthes had been able to enlarge his territory, but obviously he still had to seek foreign support. Therefore he sent about 200 Odrysian cavalymen and 300 peltasts to the Spartan general Derkylidas who since the summer of 399 had been in command in Asia Minor and who spent the winter in Bithynia (Xen. Hell. 3.2.2–5). In the meantime, the inhabitants of the Thracian Chersonese had asked the Spartans for help against the raids of the Thracians and Derkylidas was instructed to look after them. He crossed to Europe, marched through Seuthes' territory to the Chersonese, and built a wall across the isthmus of the peninsula (Xen. Hell. 3.2.8–10); this must have been at least the third such wall. The Thracians who had plagued the Chersonitans were not alone in revolting against the hegemony of the Spartans. When, after the outbreak of the Corinthian War, in 394 the Spartan king Agesilaos and his troops left Asia Minor by land, they had to fight against an army of an otherwise unknown tribe (Diod. 14.83.3).

Whereas we know relatively much about Seuthes, his sovereign Medokos, who in our literary sources is sometimes called Amadokos and who

presumably resided in the upper reaches of the Hebros River, is for the next years attested only by his coins. Seuthes eventually rose against Medokos. We do not know any details of this insurrection and have only Aristoteles' remark that Seuthes had despised his overlord (Pol. 1312a8–14). The Athenian general Thrasybulos, who, at that time, was operating on the Hellespont (389), reconciled them to one another and made them allies of the Athenians; in this context Xenophon calls Medokos/Amadokos “king of the Odrysians” and his opponent “ruler of the coast region”; this seems to indicate some form of subordination. We have fragments of both treaties, but these do not tell us anything about their purpose and their conditions;¹³ however, the existence of two different treaties leads to the assumption that there had been a mutual recognition of their dominions.

Medokos died soon after 389. An Athenian inscription of 386/5 mentions an Odrysian king Hebryzelmis, who was obviously Medokos' successor but whose origin and connection with the Odrysian royal house are unknown and who is otherwise only attested by his coins;¹⁴ these were minted near the mouth of the Hebros at Kypsela, which was much nearer to the Chersonese than the upper reaches of the Hebros. While the respective Odrysian kings had remained on friendly terms with the Athenians, the paradynast Seuthes had joined Athens' enemies shortly after the conclusion of the King's Peace (387). A little later he even tried to enlarge his territory at the expense of Hebryzelmis, but seems to have lost his own territory and to have regained it only with the help of the Athenian Iphikrates. In the final stage of the Corinthian War this general had operated on the Hellespont, but after the war he had entered Thracian service and married a daughter of Kotys, who seems to have been a son of Seuthes.

In 383 Kotys became king.¹⁵ He was the right man to strengthen the run-down Odrysian realm, vigorous, and an artful diplomat who could take advantage of the respective political conditions. We know almost nothing about the first 18 years of his rule; with the help of Iphikrates, who was one of the best generals of his age, he seems to have managed to unite his territory with the realm of the dead Hebryzelmis; his coins were also minted at Kypsela. These efforts not only to restore the Odrysian kingdom to its former extent but also to enlarge it – especially toward the Chersonese – eventually gave rise to tensions and ultimately to war with the Athenians. In the first years of the King's Peace, the Athenians had stayed away from the north and returned there only in the early 370s after the foundation of the Second Athenian Confederacy. Maroneia, Perinthos, and Byzantion had joined already in 378/7, while Selymbria, Elaious, Ainos, Dikaia, Abdera, Neapolis (Kavala), and the islands of Thasos and Samothrake followed a little later (Rhodes and Osborne 2003, 92–105). Membership in the alliance safeguarded them not only against Kotys' ambitions but also against other threats. In 375 allegedly 30,000 Triballians attacked the city of Abdera, which was rescued

only by the intervention of the Athenian general Chabrias, who thereafter garrisoned the city (Diod. 15.36.1–4).

A few years later clashes erupted on the Thracian Chersonese (Tzvetkova 2007). In order to reconstruct these events we have to rely to a high degree on a speech of the Athenian politician Demosthenes in which, according to the apposite judgment of Z. H. Archibald (1998, 221), “there is little real argument and even less history.” However, since there is no complete agreement on the course of the events and furthermore many details and dates are disputed, I abstain from a circumstantial treatment and confine myself to the following uncontested facts: in 367 the Persian satrap Ariobarzanes occupied Sestos, which was situated at the crossing of the Hellespont; a little later Kotys turned up on the Chersonese but had to withdraw very soon. The Athenian general Timotheos was more successful, since he gained Sestos and Krithote for the Athenians. In 363 (according to other scholars in 362) Kotys again attacked the Chersonese. Several Athenian generals in succession fought unsuccessfully against him and his mercenary commander Charidemos. The generals were subsequently recalled to Athens, with some of them being accused and condemned. At the same time Kotys had problems with his former treasurer Miltokythes, who had risen against him and asked the Athenians for help, although in vain. Meanwhile, the war continued, but in 360/59, Kotys was assassinated by two brothers who came from Ainos. The Athenians honored them with citizenship and golden crowns but such awards do not prove that the Athenians had instigated the assassination. If, however, the Athenians had hoped that the removal of Kotys would improve their chances in the north of the Aegean and around the Straits, the Macedonian king Philip II was to disappoint them very soon and very bitterly.

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Guide to Further Reading

The essay of A. Höck, "Das Odrysenreich in Thrakien im fünften und vierten Jahrhundert v. Chr.," *Hermes* 26, 1891, 76–117, remains valuable, whereas Archibald 1998 is without any doubt historically and archaeologically the best contribution to Thracian history in classical times. Isaac 1986 deals with the history of the Thracian coasts from the Strymon to the Danube, whereas in M. H. Hansen and Th. M. Nielsen (eds.), *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*, Oxford 2004, 854–941, you can find information on the cities along the coasts and in the interior. Since for many periods of the history of Thrace

literary and epigraphical sources are lacking, Peter 1997 is indispensable.

On the Greek colonization of the different coasts of Thrace, see Tiverios 2008; L. D. Loukopoulou, *Contribution à l'histoire de la Thrace propontique durant la période archaïque*, Athens 1989; G. R. Tsetschladze, "Greek Penetration of the Black Sea," in G. R. Tsetschladze and F. De Angelis (eds.), *The Archaeology of Greek Colonisation. Essays Dedicated to Sir John Boardman*, Oxford 1994, 111–135. Stronk 1995 is much more than just a commentary on Xenophon's text.

Notes

- 1 Hellespont and hinterland: Homer, *Iliad* 2.835–836, 844–845; 4.517–538; 5.461–462; 6.5–11; 11.218–230; 20.484–485. Kikones: Homer, *Iliad* 2.846–847; 17.70–74 (also Homer, *Odyssey* 9.39–61). Paionians: Homer, *Iliad* 2.848–850; 12.102; 16.287–294; 17.348–351; 21.139–187, 205–213; 23.560–562. Relatives in Thrace: Homer, *Iliad* 6.299; 8.302–306. Thrace as geographical term: Homer, *Iliad* 9.4–6; 13.1–14; 13.298–301; 23.226–230.
- 2 Homer, *Iliad* 9.71–72; 13.576–577; 23.807–808; 24.234–325.
- 3 Cf. now on "Early Euboean Colonisation of Chalcidice" as well as on "Second Greek colonisation of Northern Greece" Tiverios 2008; the whole coast is treated by Isaac 1986.
- 4 Cf. on the identification and localization of these emporia Zahrnt 2008.
- 5 On Thrace during the Persian Wars cf. Balcer 1988; Asheri 1990; Zahrnt 1992; Briant 1996, 155–158, 169, 544–545; Zahrnt 1997; Archibald 1998, 79–90; Stronk 1998–1999; on the route of Dareios' march, cf. Müller 1997, 809–810.
- 6 Cf. on the march of the Persian army from the crossing of the Hellespont to Therme, Hdt. 7.44–60, 105–127; cf. on the route, Müller 1975; Tuplin 2003; Boteva 2011, 750–755.
- 7 Cf. on Athenian ambitions and activities in this area and the relevant sources Badian 1993, 81–86; Archibald 1998, 114–117; Zahrnt 2007.
- 8 Cf. Archibald 1998, 102–107 on the "Origins of the Odrysians" and the "Kingdom of Sitalkes"; Sparadokos' coins (Teres and Sitalkes did not mint); Peter 1997, 62–75.
- 9 Veligianni 1995; Archibald 1998, 145–148: "The Odrysians and the Greek Coastal Cities"; Loukopoulou 2002.
- 10 Alkibiades in Thrace: Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.15–16; Diod. 13.105.3; Plut. *Alk.* 36;

Archibald 1998, 123.

- 11 Xen. Anab. 1.1.9, 1.3.3–4; 2.6.2–5; Diod. 14.12; Polyain. 2.2.6–10.
- 12 Xen. Anab. 7.1–8; cf. Lendle 1995, 411–476; Stronk 1995.
- 13 IG II² 21–22; Xen. Hell. 4.8.26; Diod. 14.94.2; cf. Archibald 1998, 124–125.
- 14 IG II² 31 = SIG³ 138; on the coins cf. Peter 1997, 106–112, and on “the development of the kingdom under Hebryzelmis” Archibald 1998, 218–219.
- 15 Cf. on Kotys Peter 1997, 112–125; Archibald 1998, 219–222.

Chapter 5

Thrace from the Assassination of Kotys I to Koroupedion (360–281 BCE)

Peter Delev

5.1 Decline and Fall of the Odrysian Kingdom (360–336 BCE)

After the death of Kotys I in 360 BCE the Odrysian Kingdom entered a troubled age which ended in its complete annihilation. The period coincides with the reign of Philip II in Macedonia. The loss of the main contemporary historians, Callisthenes, Ephorus, and above all Theopompus with his ample *Philippica*, has left us with few consistent literary accounts. Book 16 of Diodorus Siculus features an extensive summary of Philip's reign, but contains little information on events in Thrace; it is supplemented by the speeches of the contemporary Athenian orators, especially Demosthenes. Many facts and developments remain uncertain and vague because of the scanty and sometimes unreliable historical tradition.

The accession of Philip II is usually dated in the spring of 359 BCE, while the murder of Kotys took place in the preceding year on the evidence of Demosthenes (23.119); both dates remain uncertain. The death of Kotys has been placed in 359 by those who believe that there was a meeting between the two kings (Höck 1891, 99–100; Ellis 1976, 49; Fol 1975, 159; contra Badian 1983, 52–54); the hypothesis is based on uncertain premises: an anecdote mentioning a letter of Kotys to Philip (Athen. 6.248ef), and the story about a visit of Philip to Onocarsis, a residence of Kotys (Athen. 12.531e–2a = Theopomp. fr. 31 Jacoby). It has also been suggested that Philip's accession could date to 360, not 359 BCE (Hatzopoulos 1982).

This unresolved mystery is connected with another: Diodorus mentions (16.2.6, 3.4) that in the early months after Philip's accession, when his power was challenged by several pretenders, one of these, named Pausanias, sought the protection of a Thracian king, who was intent on placing him on the Macedonian throne. Philip intervened successfully and bought the favor of this king with rich gifts; the name of the latter however is not mentioned. It seems quite possible (but remains far from certain) that this could have been the occasion for Philip's visit to Onocarsis, whomever he went to meet there: Kotys still alive, or one of his successors.

After the death of Kotys, the Odrysian kingdom was divided in three parts (Dem. 23.8; Tonev 1942, 190–206). Kersebleptes the son of Kotys took the

easternmost realm, presumably to the east of the rivers Tonzos and Hebros (Kahrstedt 1921); Amadocus, probably a son of Medocus the Odrysian king in Xenophon's *Anabasis*, took the mountainous hinterland of Maroneia (Judeich 1894); while one Berisades established himself in the area around the lower Nestos (Judeich 1897). It remains unknown who of the three new kings took the rich inland plain of the Upper Hebros; an important inscription from Vetren unfortunately does not preserve the name of the king in whose name it was issued (Velkov and Domaradzka 1994). Kersebleptes inherited from his father a war with the Athenians in the Thracian Chersonesos and the service of the able mercenary commander Charidemus, who helped him deal with the renewed revolt of Kotys' former treasurer Miltokythes. His drive to reunite the split kingdom however was quashed by the resistance of the other two kings, who also hired Greek mercenaries in their service and received the support of Athens. In 357 Kersebleptes had to accept a peace treaty that formally acknowledged the division of the Odrysian kingdom (IG II² 126).

In the meantime Philip's military and political reforms in Macedonia were bearing fruit and he could undertake some aggressive ventures. In 357 BCE Philip seized the occasion presented by the revolt of the Athenian allies and proceeded to lay siege and then take Amphipolis (Diod. 16.8.2–3; Dem. 1.8; 2.6; 7.27). In the next year he fortified Krenides in the vicinity of Mount Pangaeum and gave it his own name, Philippoi; this gave him access to the gold and silver mines in the area (Diod. 16.8.6–7). The appropriation of the region came at the expense of Berisades, who seems to have died about the same time and was succeeded by his sons, Ketriporis and his brothers. The feud with the other Odrysian kings prevented Ketriporis from looking for help to the east; however, he joined in the summer of 356 BCE a pact for common action against Philip with Lippeus and Grabos, the kings of Paeonia and Illyria, under the auspices of Athens (IG II² 127). Philip was swift in preventing this danger: he attacked first and defeated the three kings one by one before they could bring their forces together (Diod. 16.22.3).

Demosthenes mentions that, either in 354 or 353, Philip was in Maroneia negotiating with an envoy of Kersebleptes, Apollonides; the two kings were evidently planning common action against Amadocus and the Athenian interests in Thrace, and the Theban commander Pammenes was also privy to their scheme (Dem. 23.183). The plot failed, and Kersebleptes was swift to change plans: he now made an arrangement with the Athenians, giving them a free hand in the Thracian Chersonesos in exchange for an end to their protection for Amadocus (Diod. 16.34.3–4). While Athens was occupying the cities of the Chersonesos with cleruchs, Kersebleptes attacked Amadocus and the Greek cities Perinthus and Byzantium. Philip seized the occasion to make them his allies, and invaded the kingdom of Kersebleptes in the autumn of 352 BCE. Although Philip fell ill during the campaign, in the end Kersebleptes was defeated, and had to send a son to Pella as a hostage (Dem.

1.13; 3.4–5; Schol. Aeschin. 2.81; Theopomp. fr. 249 Jacoby). The actual results of this brief campaign are debatable; while it is clear that Philip successfully prevented the alliance of Kersebleptes and Athens and acquired new allies in Cardia, Perinthus, and Byzantium, the full submission of Kersebleptes suggested by some authors (e.g., Hammond and Griffith 1979, 283) seems exaggerated in view of ensuing events. There were also some collateral results: Demosthenes mentions that in Thrace Philip “expelled some kings and replaced them with others” (1.13), while Justin offers an anecdote about two brothers, Thracian kings, who summoned Philip as an arbitrator, but he came with his whole army and dispossessed them both (8.3.14–15). These passages are usually associated with the sons of Berisades (Höck 1891, 108; Todorov 1933, 54; Fol 1975, 179), but Amadocus also disappears from the sources and may have been replaced by Philip with a more suitable figure – the Teres who appears henceforth in his realm (Höck 1891, 110).

The situation must have been temporarily stabilized with these events, for there is no information on any hostilities in the next several years. In 347 or early 346, however, there was a new escalation of tension. The scattered evidence of Demosthenes (7.37; 8.64; 9.15; 10.8, 65; 18.27; 19.56; Aeschin. 3.82) suggests a new Thraco-Athenian rapprochement, which resulted in the introduction of Athenian garrisons in a number of fortresses near the Thracian coast, presumably at the request of Kersebleptes. Philip’s general Antipater was involved in some military activities deep in Odrysian territory at about the same time (Theopomp. fr. 160 Jacoby = Steph. Byz. s.v. Apros; Aeschin. 2.70–74), but the exact sequence of events remains unknown. In April 346 Antipater was in Athens as Philip’s representative for the ratification of the Peace of Philocrates; Athens tried to include in the treaty Kersebleptes (who had sent a special envoy for the occasion) and some other actual allies, but this was firmly refused. While the Athenians were already bound by their oath, and before their delegation had reached Pella to receive that of Philip, the king set out treacherously on a full-scale campaign in Thrace. The Odrysian fortresses were taken by assault, the Athenian garrisons were expelled, and Philip was once again able to dictate his conditions on the vanquished enemy. The campaign was fast and efficient, but evidently had, much like the previous one, rather limited aims: the prevention of an anti-Macedonian coalition between Athens and the Odrysian king. It was characteristically targeted at the coastal region crucial to such an alliance.

It was only a few years later that Philip felt confident to undertake a full-scale invasion of the kingdoms of Teres and Kersebleptes, who seem to have buried their mutual strife in face of the common danger. This was a war on a scale not comparable with the previous short incursions, and seems to have lasted through three summer seasons, 342–340 BCE, without interruptions for the intervening winters (Ellis 1976, 166–171; Hammond and Griffith 1979, 554–566; Badian 1983, 66–70). Some historians have suggested that this was the

first stage in Philip's preparations for the war against the Persian Empire which were already under way (Wüst 1938, 106); the humbler, officially proclaimed aim was the protection of the Greek coastal cities from the encroachment of Kersebleptes (Diod. 16.71.1).

The information about the Thracian war of 342–340 is scanty and incomplete. At the outset Philip seems to have passed through Cardia, where he hired the young Eumenes into his service (Plut., Eum. 1; Nepos, Eum. 1) and may have taken Ainos (Dem. 58.37–38); from there he presumably entered the Thracian interior (Dem. 8 hypoth. 3) along the course of the Hebros. In the early stages of the war Philip met with defeat in at least one battle (Polyaen., Strat. 4.2.13), and had to spend the winter in harsh conditions, ill or wounded (Dem. 8.35, 45; 10.15–16). In the spring of 341, after 10 months of fighting, the main aims of the war had not been achieved and Philip called in additional forces from Macedonia and Thessaly (Dem. 8.14). By that time he had conquered several important fortified places (Demosthenes mentions Drongilon, Cabyle, and Masteira) and reconstructed them as the bases for his continuing operations (Dem. 8.44; 10.15).

The events in 341 and in the first half of 340 BCE which brought about the final victory of Philip in Thrace and the elimination of the Odrysian kings Kersebleptes and Teres have not left any detailed evidence, with the exception of some casual notices on peripheral actions. The Athenian strategos Diopeithes attacked from the Thracian Chersonesos Philip's ally Cardia, and later made an incursion in the seaside areas controlled by Philip (Dem. 8 hypoth. 2–3; 9.16; 10.65; 12.3, 11). In another episode Philip, who was suffering from inadequate funds, made an incursion for plunder in the lands of the Getae to the north of the Haemus, but was repulsed from a city (Odessos?) by a group of Getic priests who came out dressed in white and playing on guitars (Jord., Get. 10.65; Athen. 14.24 = Theopomp. fr. 216 Jacoby; Steph. Byz. s.v. Γετία). It is often presumed that it must have been during these northern raids that Philip made an alliance with a Getic king, Kotelas, and married his daughter Meda (Athen. 13.5; Jordan., Get. 10.65). It would also have been during the Thracian war that Philip first entered in contact with the Scythian king Atheas who had crossed the Danube into Dobrudja; on his request Philip sent him some military aid (Justin. 9.2.1–4; Plut., Mor. 174 ef).

According to the brief summary of Diodorus (16.71.2), having invaded Thrace with a large force, Philip overcame the Thracians in several battles, imposed on the conquered barbarians the payment of a tithe to the Macedonians, and founded strong cities at key places. The most important of these foundations seem to have been Philippopolis, “established by Philip the son of Amyntas on the Hebros” and named for him (Steph. Byz. s.v. Φιλίπποπολις; see also Conchev 1938; Danov 1938; IGBulg 3.1, 23–25; Detev et al. 1966; Danov 1979, 245–267; Kesyakova 1999), and Cabyle on the Tonzos, “a Macedonian colony” (Steph. Byz. s.v. Καλύβη; for literature

on Cabyle see [Chapter 6](#)).

In the summer of 340 BCE, having finished with the subjugation of the Odrysian kingdom, Philip laid siege to the Greek cities of Perinthus and Byzantium (Diod. 16.74.2–77.3; Ellis 1976, 174–180; Hammond and Griffith 1979, 566–581). While he was besieging fruitlessly the two cities, his 16-year-old son Alexander made a successful campaign against the Maedi on the Strymon (Plut., *Alex.* 9.1), and the generals Parmenio and Antipater seem to have led some military action in the lands of the Bessi (Theopomp. fr. 217; Polyæn., *Strat.* 4.4.1; Strabo 7 fr. 59). Early in 339 BCE Philip despaired of taking Perinthus and Byzantium and lifted his siege; in order to restore his shaken finances and the confidence of his army he made a swift expedition against the Scythians of Atheas. The Scythian king died in battle somewhere near the Danube, the Scythians were driven for good beyond the river, and Philip took great booty, including many horses of the Scythian breed (Justin. 9.2.10–16; Aeschin. 3.128). However, the return of the victorious Macedonian army did not go as smoothly: it was checked by the Triballi, a northwestern Thracian tribe, who demanded a part of the spoils; when this was refused, they attacked and Philip was severely wounded, the whole train was captured, and the Macedonians had to make an ignominious retreat (Justin. 9.3.1–3).

5.2 Thrace in the Age of Alexander the Great (336–323 BCE)

In the spring and early summer of 335 BCE, the year after his accession, Alexander the Great undertook an expedition against the Triballi in Thrace with his whole army. Scarcely mentioned by the other historians of Alexander, the expedition is recounted in some detail only by Arrian (*Arr.*, *Anab.* 1.1.4–4.8; cf. Diod. 17.8.1; Plut., *Alex.* 11.2; Curt. 9.6.20; Strabo 7.3.8; Polyæn., *Strat.* 4.3.11). The route of the Macedonian army to the Danube is the object of a debate of long standing, springing from the unknown location of the places mentioned by Arrian and the incertitude on the whereabouts of the Triballi in that age: their original territory was to the west of the Oskios River (mod. Iskar), but a contested theory makes them migrate to the Dobrudja in the east about the middle of the fourth century BCE (see Papazoglu 1978, 25–40, 45–52). According to the account of Arrian, Alexander started from Amphipolis, crossed the Nestos, and entered the lands of the “independent Thracians” (in the Rhodope?); on the tenth day he reached the Haemus, where he met and overcame some local resistance. Then he defeated an army of the Triballi in a battle by the river Lyginos (?), but could not achieve anything against those who had retreated with all their movable possessions to the Danubian island of Peuce (Belene?) together with the Triballian king Syrmos, despite the timely arrival of a small Macedonian fleet which had sailed up the Danube from the Black Sea. In a demonstration of force Alexander crossed the Danube, defeated a swarm of Getae who had

gathered on the northern bank of the river, and took one of their fortified places. He then accepted ambassadors from King Syrmos and the other independent Danubian tribes and concluded a pact with all, including some Celts from the Adriatic who had also sent a delegation. After this the Macedonian army retreated hastily to the south through the lands of the Agriani and Paeonians, that is, through the areas of the Upper Strymon and Middle Axios, in order to invade the lands of the rebellious Illyrians.

The expedition of Alexander the Great against the Triballi in 335 BCE could not have had the ambition to make the Danube River a “strategic frontier” of the Macedonian kingdom (this is imputed by, e.g., Glotz, Roussel, and Cohen 1938, 46–47; Will, Mossé, and Goukowsky 1975, 253); Arrian (1.1.4) suggests that he only wanted to ensure his rear before the start of the Persian expedition, while the wish to punish the Triballi for their attack on Philip in 339 BCE and the appropriation of the Scythian booty seems a plausible additional reason. The great silver treasure found in Rogozen some 30 km from the Danube (Cook 1989; Fol, Nikolov, and Hoddinott 1986; Fol 1989) could have been buried during Alexander’s expedition, while the exceptional finds from the burials in the Mogilanska Tumulus in Vratsa dating from the second and third quarter of the fourth century BCE (Torbov 2005) apparently mark a major centre of Triballian power, maybe the main seat of the royal dynasty.

The information on the Thracian units in Alexander’s army during the wars in Asia suggest a marked difference in the status of the southern and northern Thracians (Berve 1926, 1: 133–139). The main Thracian detachments more or less regularly mentioned in the battle accounts, the heavy cavalry commanded by the Macedonian Agathon and the light infantry which included the *akontistai* of Sitalces and probably another smaller body of *peltasts* jointly commanded by Ptolemaeus the “strategos of the Thracians,” are usually designated either as “Thracians” or as “Odrysians” and therefore would have come mainly from the territories of the Odrysian kingdom annexed by Philip. The light Paeonian horse commanded by Ariston and the elite light infantry (*akontistai*) of the Agriani under Attalus are similarly recognized as regular conscription units. Diodorus (17.17.4) is the only author who mentions, in the list of Alexander’s army crossing into Asia, Triballian and Illyrian infantry; these seem to have been allied volunteers or mercenaries rather than conscripted units. The Triballi are not mentioned any more, and similarly there is no mention at all of Getae in the accounts of Alexander’s wars in the East. The actual imposition of direct Macedonian rule remains doubtful even for some tribal groups in the south, such as the Bessi or Sapaei; the “independent Thracians” through whose lands Alexander marched in 335 BCE (Arr., *Anab.* 1.1.5) offer an explicit confirmation of this situation.

The part of Thrace which Philip conquered between 342 and 340 BCE was organized, either directly upon or shortly after its subjugation, as a distinct

administrative entity governed by a special “strategos for Thrace” (Diod. 17.62.5; Arr., *Anab.* 1.25.2, cf. Berve 1926, 1: 228; Bengtson 1937, 39–40; Yordanov 1994). The first known holder of the post was the Lyncestian Alexander son of Aeropus, who was appointed by Alexander the Great shortly after he came to power and remained in office until the spring of 334 when he accompanied his king in Asia (Arr., *Anab.* 1.25.2; Kaerst 1894; Berve 1926, 2: 17–19, no. 37). He must have been responsible for raising the Thracian units that were to join the Macedonian army in the Persian expedition.

With his departure for Asia in 334 BCE Alexander left as his governor in Europe Antipater with a sizable army at his disposal (Diod. 17.118.1; 18.12.1; cf. Arr., *Anab.* 1.11.3; 7.12.4; Curt. 3.1.39; Justin. 11.7.1). Among his main duties was the regular levying and sending of reinforcements to the king. Antipater must have been invested with the supreme power over all European possessions including Thrace, and the “strategos for Thrace” would have been his subordinate. However, this might not have been specifically stipulated, and a Thracian governor, Memnon, revolted, presumably asserting his autonomy. The event is tied chronologically with the battle of Gaugamela in 331 BCE. In the account of Diodorus, Memnon, who had troops in his command, stirred the Thracians to revolt; Antipater invaded Thrace with his whole army, but the simultaneous uprising in Greece led by the Spartan king Agis forced him to make a truce with Memnon and relocate his forces to the south (Diod. 17.62.1–63.1; cf. Berve 1926, 2: 254, no. 499; Stähelin 1931). Memnon eventually remained in office as late as 326 BCE if we accept his identification with the commander of an important reinforcement (5000 Thracian cavalry, 7000 infantry, and lots of arms) sent to Alexander in India (Curt. 9.3.21; but cf. Diod. 17.95.4; Arr., *Anab.* 5.20.7).

The evidence on the eventual third strategos of Thrace, Zopyrion, is contradictory (Berve 1926, 2: no. 340; Ziegler 1972). Justin (12.1.4–5, 2.16–17; cf. 2.3.4; 37.3.2; Trog., *Prol.* 12) mentions him as a “prefect of the Pontus” who organized an expedition against the Scythians and perished with his 30,000-strong army; the story is placed in a letter from Antipater received by Alexander in the summer of 330 BCE which also contained information about the Spartan rebellion under King Agis (331 BCE) and the death of Alexander of Epirus, the brother of Olympias, in Italy (330 BCE). The other version, that of Curtius Rufus (10.1.43–45), also places the story of Zopyrion in a letter, but one Alexander received much later, in the winter of 325/4 BCE, and which contained an account of events in Europe and Asia during the Indian campaign of 327–325 BCE. Zopyrion, named here “governor of Thrace,” is said to have invaded the lands of the Getae and to have perished with his whole army in a tempest (on sea?); his defeat provoked a Thracian uprising headed by Seuthes. There is a casual notice in Macrobius (*Saturn.* 1.11.33) about an unsuccessful siege of Olbia by Zopyrion.

There are three possible ways to solve this chronological riddle. The first two

give priority to the version of Justin and place Zopyrion in the late 330s, either before Memnon as the preceding strategos of Thrace or together with him as an independent governor of the Pontic coast of Thrace (rather than Pontic Cappadocia in Anatolia). The third hypothesis, which is preferred in modern literature (but remains far from certain), places Zopyrion after Memnon, in the mid 320s, relying more on the chronological indications of Curtius.

A further riddle is added by an Athenian inscription from 330 BCE, found long ago between the theatre of Dionysus and the Odeon of Herodes Atticus and honoring a certain “Reboulas, the son of Seuthes and brother of Cotys” (IG II² 349; Tod 1948, no. 193). It is usually assumed that this document attests to a resumption of political relations between Athens and the Odrysians, but the whole situation remains enigmatic. Athens refrained from participation in the anti-Macedonian rising of Agis III in 331 BCE; is it acceptable to suggest that now she initiated a game of her own with the Thracians as coalition partners? The figure of Reboulas is controversial. The usual assumption that he was a son of Seuthes III (e.g., Berve 1926, 2: 346, no. 686; Fol 1975, 107–108, 115–116) fails to explain in a convincing manner the unusual reference to his brother; an old suggestion by Adelbert Höck (1891, 89–90) makes him much more acceptably a son of Seuthes II and brother of Cotys I. In any case, the remark of Diodorus that Memnon had incited the Thracians to revolt in 331 BCE and the mysterious mission of Reboulas in Athens in the following year suggest some measure of Odrysian political activity by that time.

The passage in Curtius about Zopyrion contains the earliest mention of Seuthes III, who stirred the Odrysians to rebellion (Curt. 10.1.45; on Seuthes III see Swoboda 1923; Berve 1926, 2: 353, no. 702; Todorov 1933, 62–66; Fol 1975, 116; Tacheva 2000, 10–15). The origin of Seuthes is uncertain; an identification with Seuthes, the hyparch of Kersebleptes (Polyaen., *Strat.* 7.32), is possible, but cannot be substantiated. The alternative dates of the death of Zopyrion place the first attested appearance of Seuthes either in the late 330s or in the mid 320s. It would have been about this time that he started building his city of Seuthopolis on the middle Tonzos, near modern Kazanluk (on Seuthopolis see Dimitrov 1961; Danov 1962; Chichikova 1970; Dimitrov and Chichikova 1978; Dimitrov et al. 1984).

The archaeological finds at Sveshtari in northeastern Bulgaria suggest that while Seuthes was reviving the Odrysian state in the south, the Getae in the northeast were entering a stage of political unity and centralization that would reach its climax under King Dromichaetes early in the third century BCE (Delev 2000).

5.3 Thrace in the Age of the Successors (323–281 BCE)

With the redistribution of satrapies effected by the regent Perdikkas in Babylon in the summer of 323 BCE Lysimachus, one of the personal bodyguards of Alexander, was appointed to rule in Thrace (Arr., Succ. 1,7; Diod. 18.3.2; Curt. 10.10.4; Justin. 13.4.16; Dexip. 3; on Lysimachus see Hünérwadel 1901; Possenti 1901; Landucci Gattinoni 1992; Lund 1992; Franco 1993; Delev 2004). The suggestion that with his appointment Thrace was formally proclaimed a satrapy remains conjectural; however, it was certainly detached from the realm assigned jointly to Antipater and Craterus which included Macedonia, Greece, and some outlying western parts of Thrace. Soon after his arrival, probably in the spring of 322 BCE, Lysimachus met Seuthes III, the revolted Odrysian who seems to have held under his sway much of the country, in a major battle (Diod. 18.14.2–4; Arr., Succ. 1,10; Paus. 1.9.6). According to Diodorus, Seuthes had a great superiority in numbers, but the engagement produced no clear victor.

There is no direct information on the ensuing events, but in one way or another a settlement was reached, and Seuthes preserved his dominion in the interior with Seuthopolis on the Tonzos as presumably his main centre, while the littoral of the Aegean Sea and the Propontis passed into the hands of Lysimachus. The delimitation of the two realms remains indefinite.

Lysimachus also encroached successfully to the north along the Black Sea coast and the Greek cities as far as the Danube Delta passed under his sway. In the areas further inland situated between the Haemus and the Danube, the Getae remained independent, by that time probably united under the dynasty settled in the fortified city at Sveshtari.

In 313 BCE, the Getae together with some Scythians from across the Danube came to the aid of the Pontic cities which revolted from Lysimachus; the sedition fits into the greater panorama of the Third War of the Diadochi and would have been inspired by Antigonos the One-Eyed. Then, while Lysimachus went north with his whole army against the rebellious cities and their allies, Seuthes defected too and blocked the Haemus passes, while Antigonos sent in land and sea forces from Asia Minor. But Lysimachus was swift to move, took resolute action against his many adversaries and his success prevented a major crossing of Antigonid forces into Europe which could have changed the outcome of the war (Diod. 19.73.1–10).

The most famous of all Thracian treasures, the gold treasure from Panagyurishte, may have been connected with these events (on the treasure see Svoboda and Concev 1956; Simon 1960; Venedikov 1961). It has been suggested that this magnificent set of gold vessels was produced toward the end of the fourth or early in the third century BCE in the Greek city of Lampsacus in Asia Minor. The date, the place of discovery, the probable origin, and the exclusive splendor of the set suggest that the Panagyurishte treasure might have been a royal present from an Early Hellenistic ruler, either Lysimachus or Antigonos the One-Eyed, to a local Thracian dynast,

possibly Seuthes III, who is recognized to have had political relations with both.

In 309 or 308 BCE, Lysimachus inaugurated his new capital, Lysimachia on the isthmus of the Thracian Chersonese (Diod. 20.29.1; Marm. Parium B 19; Justin. 17.1.2); a few years later, in the “year of the kings” (306/5 BCE) he was among those who followed the example of Antigonus and assumed the royal title (Plut., Demetr. 18; Diod. 20.53.2–4; Justin. 15.2.10–14; App., Syr. 54). Lysimachus played a leading role in the Fourth War of the Diadochi which culminated in the great battle at Ipsos in Phrygia in 301 BCE, and added to his Thracian realm the greater part of Asia Minor.

The wars of Lysimachus with the Getae and their king Dromichaetes belong in the 290s BCE (Delev 2000, 386–392; 2004, 204–215). In an earlier episode datable to the years after Ipsos, the Getae took the son of Lysimachus, Agathocles, prisoner, but later set him free of their own accord (Diod. 21.11). It might have been after this first conflict that Lysimachus gave a daughter in marriage to the king of the Getae (Paus. 1.9.6). The second war took place between 294 and 291 BCE; now Lysimachus was taken captive with his whole army, but was later released by Dromichaetes (Diod. 21.12). Diodorus mentions the capital city of Dromichaetes, Helis, where the king of the Getae gave a feast to his captive before setting him free; this has been identified plausibly with the archaeological remains near Sveshtari.

In the 280s BCE Lysimachus reached the peak of his power; having ousted Demetrius Poliorcetes and then his own ally Pyrrhos, he became the master of Macedonia and its Greek dependencies, which were added to his Thracian and Anatolian domains. Early in that decade Lysimachia was destroyed in a major earthquake, an omen of the doom which was hanging on the house of the mighty king (Justin. 17.1.1–3). The tragedy sprang from family discord; probably misled by his wife Arsinoe, a daughter of Ptolemy who would have tried to secure the succession for her own children, Lysimachus accused of treason and murdered his first-born son and heir apparent, Agathocles (Trog., Prol. 17; Justin. 17.1.4–5; Paus. 1.10.3; Memnon 5.6–7 Jacoby; Strabo 13.4.1; App., Syr. 64). The wife of Agathocles, Lysandra, another daughter of Ptolemy, fled with her children to the court of Seleucus, and many of the friends of the murdered prince followed suit, afraid of persecution. Seleucus seized the occasion and invaded the kingdom of Lysimachus with his whole army. The last two of the diadochi still alive met in a great battle at Koroupedion in western Anatolia in 281 BCE; Lysimachus was killed in the action and with his fall his great kingdom disintegrated (Trog., Prol. 17; Justin. 17.1.9–2.2; Memnon 5.7, 6.1 Jacoby; Paus. 1.10.5; App., Syr. 62, 64).

In the northwest of Asia Minor, the Bithynian Thracians had remained practically independent during the reign of Alexander the Great (Gabelko 2005, 128–130). In the Age of the Successors the Bithynian kingdom was ruled by Zipoites (326–278 BCE, see Habicht 1972; Gabelko 2005, 131–166).

He led with varying success wars against both Lysimachus and Antiochus I, and managed to preserve and further substantiate the independence of Bithynia, which developed henceforth as a typical Hellenistic kingdom. The royal court was gradually Hellenized, and the cities played an increasingly important economic, social, and political role. Probably in 297 BCE Zipointes assumed the royal title; this is the starting date of the so-called “Bithynian era.”

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Guide to Further Reading

The existing literature on the age of Philip, Alexander, and the Diadochi is extensive. Some of the general works and most of those important for developments in Thrace have been mentioned in the References. Comparatively full bibliographies can be found in the respective volumes of the CAH (vol. 6, 1994, and vol. 7, part 1, 1984) and in Blackwell's *Companion to Ancient Macedonia* (Joseph Roisman and Ian Worthington, eds., 2010). Some more or less recent titles are listed below.

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Chapter 6

From Koroupedion to the Beginning of the Third Mithridatic War (281–73 BCE)

Peter Delev

The history of ancient Thrace in the Hellenistic age is particularly difficult to reconstruct, mainly because of the sad state of the extant sources. The few names and events that have left some trace in the historical tradition are hard to fit into a consistent and continuous narrative, and the reigning political fragmentation, economic deterioration and general instability only enhance this unhappy situation. Some sort of exception may be found in the case of the Thracians of Asia Minor: the history of the kingdom of Bithynia, if not attested in great detail and lucidity, at least seems to permit some sort of consecutive chronological account.

The period has been reviewed more extensively only by Christo Danov (1979, 23–145) and Margarita Tacheva (1997, 30–149). There are short overviews by Brunhilde Lenk (1936, 433–441), Joseph Wiesner (1963, 145–157), Alexander Fol (1979), and Velizar Velkov (1979a, b); a more recent one by the present author only reaches to the early second century BCE (Delev 2003; cf. Delev 2004, 263–297). The history of the kingdom of Bithynia has also been much neglected; besides the short article in the RE (Meyer 1897) there was until recently only one general study by Giovanni Vitucci (1953); now this is supplemented by the extensive treatise of Oleg Gabelko (2005).

6.1 From Koroupedion to the Accession of Philip V in Macedonia, 281–221 BCE

The battle at Koroupedion in 281 BCE left the victor Seleucus at least nominally heir to all the possessions of the fallen Lysimachus. A few months later he crossed the Hellespont with his army to take possession of the European part of his new acquisitions, only to find his death in the Thracian Chersonese at the hands of Ptolemy Keraunos, the banished first-born son of Ptolemy Lagus who was then in his entourage. Keraunos was hailed, probably as an avenger for the death of Lysimachus, by the citizens of Lysimachia, which occupied a strategic position on the isthmus of the peninsula; he then won to his side the army of Seleucus and was proclaimed king (Memnon 8.1–3; cf. Heinen 1972, 61–63; Hammond and Walbank 1988, 243; Delev 2004, 267–268).

Keraunos proceeded to consolidate his gains, meeting resistance only at the hands of Antigonus Gonatas, the grandson of Monophthalmus and son of

Demetrius; the naval superiority of Keraunos, who had taken over the fleet of Lysimachus and received valuable help from Heraclea Pontica, proved decisive in this short-lived conflict (Memnon 8.4–6; Justin. 17.2.10, 24.1.8; cf. Hammond and Walbank 1988, 245–246). Taking hold of Macedonia, Keraunos treated with Pyrrhus of Epirus and with Ptolemy Philadelphus and swindled his half-sister Arsinoe, the widow of Lysimachus, into a fake marriage which gave him entrance into the fortress of Cassandrea; Arsinoe was expelled, losing two of her sons in this unfortunate affair (Trog., Prol. 24; Justin. 17.2.6–12, 24.2–3; Memnon 8.7).

The rule of Keraunos in Macedonia proved short-lived; he was slain in the first major battle at the onset of the great Celtic invasion which overran much of the Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor in the early 270s. The problems pertaining to the Celts in Thrace will be dealt with elsewhere in the present volume (see [Chapter 24](#)). It is sufficient to note here that the Celtic hordes ravaged the whole of Thrace in several successive waves, causing havoc and destruction; Dromichaetes, the king of the Getae, might have died during this invasion if he is the king buried in the great tomb at Sveshtari, as has been suggested (Delev 2000, 400–401).

In the meantime another elusive war was fought in Asia Minor between Antigonus Gonatas and Antiochus I Soter (Trog., Prol. 24; Memnon 10.1; cf. Hammond and Walbank 1988, 249–251). It seems that Antigonus, having failed in his attempt to take hold of Macedonia, had now ventured on a desperate invasion of Asia, just like his father in his last campaign less than ten years before. Few details of this conflict have survived; Photius' excerpts from Memnon mention that Antigonus had the Bithynian king Nicomedes as his ally, that the action lasted for a long time and that big armies were engaged on both sides. The two enemies then reached a settlement, the reasons and clauses of which remain unknown, except for the marriage arrangement between Antigonus and Phila, the daughter of his sister Stratonice and Seleucus (Justin. 25.1.1). It might be suggested that the death of Keraunos and the ensuing confusion in Macedonia could have incited Antigonus to change his plans once more, discarding his Asiatic adventure and throwing his forces into a renewed attempt to conquer the Macedonian homeland. Having crossed over to Europe, he eventually defeated a large Celtic army near Lysimachia on the Thracian Chersonese (Trog., Prol. 25; Justin. 25.1.1–3; Diog. Laert. 2.141). This battle, fought probably in 277 BC, paved his way to the Macedonian throne.

It remains unknown whether the peace between the two kings included any definite stipulations about the Thracian littoral; later Seleucid claims in Thrace authorize the suggestion that they could have split the European part of the heritage of Lysimachus between them, Antigonus receiving Macedonia and Antiochus Thrace (thus, e.g., Tarn 1913, 168; Beloch 1925, 566; contra Walbank 1984, 230), but the supposition remains purely conjectural. Even if

such an agreement had ever existed, Antiochus Soter would not have had the occasion to realize his claim: there is no trace in the historical tradition of any Thraceward activity on his part; nor, for that matter, of any activity of Antigonus east of the Nestos.

The first definite information of events on the Thracian littoral after the victory of Gonatas at Lysimachia dates from the reign of the successor of Antiochus I, Antiochus II Theos (261–246 BCE), who seems to have led a major campaign in the area. This would have begun with the occupation of the Thracian Chersonese, where the mint of Lysimachia issued silver tetradrachms in his name (Newell 1977, 337). From the Chersonese he seems to have invaded the interior of the country; Polyaeus describes him laying siege to Cypsela on the lower Hebros, accompanied by Thracian allies (Polyaen., *Strat.* 4.16). A strategos of Antiochus was honored in a fragmentary decree in Doric dialect (possibly Mesambrian) from the middle of the third century found in Apollonia Pontica (IGBulg 1², no. 388). A war of Antiochus II with Byzantium is mentioned in Photius' excerpt from the Heracleian chronicle of Memnon and should also be put in connection with his Thracian enterprise (Memnon 15). The most convincing evidence on the scale of Antiochus' presence in Thrace is offered by the ample numismatic finds reaching to Seuthopolis and Cabyle in the deep interior (Youroukova 1982; 1992, 147–151; Draganov 1993, 56–68). In the absence of a coherent historical narrative, however, the events remain absolutely enigmatic, and their chronology is disputable within the limits of his rather short reign.

The Thracian campaign of Antiochus Theos seems to confirm that at this time Antigonus Gonatas was not the master of the Thracian coast, at least in its eastern part: Antiochus would not have gone conquering the possessions of his brother-in-law, who was also his main ally against Ptolemy Philadelphus in the Second Syrian War. It is better to assume that the Ptolemies had already established their rule over important parts of the Aegean littoral, probably during the Chremonidean War (267–261 BCE) in which Ptolemy the son of Lysimachus by Arsinoe might have tried to regain parts of his father's heritage with the aid of his step-father Philadelphus (see Huss 1998, 238, 243). This view is corroborated by a passage of Polybius (5.34.7–8) mentioning that the “predecessors” of Ptolemy Philopator “ruled over the coastal cities and ports from Pamphylia to the Hellespont and the region of Lysimachia and controlled the events in Thrace and Macedonia for they had in their possession Aenos, Maroneia and the further cities”; the plural implies not only Ptolemy III Euergetes, but also Ptolemy II Philadelphus. On this reading, the Thracian campaign of Antiochus Theos should be placed in the context of his actions against the exterior domains of the Ptolemies during the Second Syrian War and therefore be dated before 253 BCE, when he made peace with Philadelphus and married his daughter Berenice. Other eventual enemies whom Antiochus might have fought in Thrace include the Celtic

kingdom of Tyllis, some of the Greek coastal cities (one certain is Byzantium), and some of the independent Thracian potentates in the interior.

The internal troubles of the Seleucid kingdom in the reign of Seleucus II Callinicus permitted the successor of Philadelphus, Ptolemy III Euergetes (246–221 BCE), to bring the sea empire of the Ptolemies to its greatest strength and prosperity. The whole Aegean littoral of Thrace from Abdera through Maroneia and Aenus to Lysimachia and the Thracian Chersonese was in this period under the control of the king of Egypt and his ubiquitous navy (cf. Polyb. 5.34.7–8). As the grandson of Lysimachus through his mother, Arsinoe I, Euergetes had quite legitimate claims for the Thracian heritage, if the question of legitimacy was at all an issue (except as sheer propaganda) in Early Hellenistic times. A decree of Samothrace from this period honors the Lacedaemonian Hippomedon, son of Agesilaus, who was a “strategos placed by king Ptolemy over the Hellespontus and the Thracian littoral” (IG XII, 8, 126; Bengtson 1952, 178). Another inscription mentions one Epinicus, placed by Ptolemy as governor of Maroneia (Bakalakis and Scranton 1938; Bengtson 1952, 179, 183).

The situation in the Thracian interior in the period between the establishment of the Celtic kingdom of Tyllis and its collapse some 60 years later remains controversial. Despite the uncertainty over the location of Tyllis, it seems evident that the Celtic kings could not have ruled over an extensive territory on both sides of the Haemus, from Byzantium to the Danube. The ample evidence for the existence of other political entities in the Thracian interior creates rather a general picture of political division and fragmentation. There was an unstable coexistence in the third century BCE of multiple distinct political units in a disunited Southern Thrace; the Celtic kingdom of Tyllis was just one element in a complex and presumably constantly changing political mosaic.

The city of Cabyle, situated at the great bend of the Tonzos River (mod. Tundzha), offers a good example (on Cabyle see IGBulg 3.2, 164–165; Milchev 1971; Ivanov 1982; Velkov 1983; Dimitrov 1987; Velkov 1991; Draganov 1993; Getov 1995). If we trust the usual dating of the great Seuthopolis inscription, the activity of the local Thracian sovereign Spartocos started before the death of Lysimachus; his bronze coins with the legend βασιλέως Σπαρτόκου are, however, believed to have been minted in the city only after 281 BCE. Soon afterward, Cabyle began to autonomously mint coins, a unique development for the whole interior of Thrace in this age. The city continued to mint for a century, including, among numerous issues in bronze, silver Alexander-type tetradrachms in the later third century. The active and stable coinage warrants the suggestion of political independence of Cabyle in this period as a self-governing Hellenistic polis, while the distribution area of its autonomous and countermarked bronze coins delimits clearly the large city territory, reaching to the Balkan range in the north and to

the modern cities of Nova Zagora in the west, Karnobat in the east, and Topolovgrad in the south (Draganov 1993, *passim*; Tacheva 2000, 19–24).

In addition to the usual city coins, the mint of Cabyle also struck occasional royal issues. Scostocos, in whose name the city minted bronze coins about the middle of the third century, remains an elusive figure; he might have been a Thracian or a Celtic ruler. Around 220 BCE, Cabyle minted Alexander-type silver tetradrachms in the name of Cavarus, the last Celtic king. The striking of these issues simultaneously with the continuing production of autonomous silver coins in the name of the city implies that the city enjoyed a degree of independence and would not have been directly integrated in the Celtic kingdom of Tyllis.

The great Seuthopolis inscription (IGBulg 3.2, 1731; Velkov 1991, 7–11, no. 1; Elvers 1994) attests, in contrast to the evidently stable situation of Spartocos in Cabyle, a relative deterioration of the position of Seuthopolis, where Berenice seems to have taken the rule after the presumed demise of her husband Seuthes III; she is mentioned together with her four sons, Hebryzelmis, Teres, Satocos, and Sadalas, who were probably still underage. The end of Seuthopolis and its ruling dynasty is an object of controversy in recent publications; an eventual date of the destruction of the city in the middle 270s (Dimitrov 1984, 27) would evidently place it in relation with the Celtic invasion, while the later date maintained by some authors (e.g., Tacheva 2000, 25–27) suggests that Seuthopolis continued to be the center of an independent inland Thracian kingdom all through the second quarter of the third century.

Another local principality is attested by coin issues bearing the name Adaeus and usually dated about the middle of the third century. The exact location of the realm of Adaeus remains uncertain but is usually placed in the area of the lower Hebros, while his name suggests he might have been of Macedonian descent.

A Thracian king of the name of Cotys is mentioned, together with his son Rhescuporis, in a fragmentary decree of Apollonia Pontica found in Burgas and dated in the middle of the third century (IGBulg 1², no. 389). This inscription is readily associated with a rare bronze coin bearing the names of Cotys and Rhescuporis both accompanied by the royal title (Youroukova 1992, 153–157). The king Cotys of the Apollonia decree and of these coins, however, cannot be identified with certainty with the “Cotys, the son of Rhaizdos, king of the Thracians” (Κότυς Ραΐζδου Θραικῶν βασιλεύς) known from a Delphic proxeny decree that is dated to either the 270s or the 260s (SIG 1³, 438), although such an identification does not seem as impossible as had been suggested by G. Mihailov (1961, 40–41).

The Mesambrian decree for Sadalas stands out as one of the most interesting and often discussed monuments attesting the existence of independent

Thracian principalities contemporary to the Celtic kingdom of Tylis (IGBulg 12, no. 307). The predecessors (προγόντοι) of the Thracian potentate – Mopsuestios, Tarutinos, Medistas, and Cotys – constitute a whole local dynasty; their domain however remains elusive territorially. The fact that the treaty between Sadalas and Mesambria discussed the return of wrecked shiploads, and the city decreed for him the right “to sail in and out,” implies that his domain should have been a coastal one, situated either to the south or to the north of Mesambria. The date of this inscription remains debatable between the time of the Celtic invasion (G. Mihailov) and the second half of the third century BCE (Danov 1968, 36, 434), as does the affiliation of the dynasty of Sadalas (Odryian or Astaeon?). The situation in the Thracian lands to the north of the Haemus remains no less enigmatic. The fortified city near Sveshtari, which must have been the center of the Getic political union under Dromichaetes in the time of Lysimachus, survived the Celtic invasion, but perished later about the middle of the third century (Delev 2000, 398–399). Probably in the second quarter of the century and most certainly in its second half, the lands of the Getae would have passed to their usual state of political disunity (Strabo 7.3.11). In a stratagem describing the siege of Cypsela by Antiochus II Theos, Polyaeus (4.16) mentions one Teres and one Dromichaetes as Thracian allies of the Seleucid king; the two names have respectively Odryian and Getic associations, and the latter could have been a descendant of Dromichaetes the contemporary of Lysimachus, or even himself, if we discard the assumption that he died in the Celtic invasion and was buried in the great Sveshtari tomb.

In Asia Minor, the Thracian kingdom of Bithynia reached a state of considerable might and prosperity under the rule of Nicomedes I (278–255 BCE), who successfully preserved its autonomy from the aspirations of the Seleucids (Geyer 1936, 493–494, no. 3; Gabelko 2005, 167–197). At the start of his rule Nicomedes induced the crossing of the Celts into Asia Minor and used them to fight his separatist brother, Zipoetes. In 264 BCE Nicomedes founded his new capital at the head of the Astakos gulf, naming it in the Hellenistic fashion Nicomedia. Like so many other Hellenistic rulers, he posed as a protector of the arts; an anecdote describes his attempt to buy the Cnidian Aphrodite by Praxiteles from the islanders.

Nicomedes left the heritage of his kingdom to his children from his second wife, Etazeta. However, his disinherited first-born son Ziaelas fought for the throne with the help of Celtic mercenaries and successfully ousted his step-mother and her children, who fled to Macedonia. Ziaelas ruled from 254 to 228 BCE (Habicht 1972; Gabelko 2005, 198–226). Like his father he also founded a city with his name, Ziaela. Little is known of his rule; in the end, he perished at the hands of the same Celtic mercenaries who had brought him to power and was succeeded by his son, Prusias.

6.2 From the Accession of Philip V to the Establishment of the Roman Province of Macedonia, 221–148 BCE

Although the main political events in this period are better attested in comparison with the preceding one, mainly thanks to the works of Polybios and Livy, Thrace remains in the shadows and it is practically impossible to develop a consistent and systematic narrative of its history. For this reason, even the chronological frame of the period has had to be marked with external events.

A new situation was gradually taking shape in the Aegean area during the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 BCE). His victory against Antiochus III at Raphia in 217 BCE was achieved at a high price, for the introduction of Egyptians in the army provoked the uprising of Harmachis in which the natives nearly toppled the ruling Macedonian dynasty, while the ensuing financial problems curtailed for a long time the resources of the Ptolemaic kingdom. The new king of Alexandria indulged in dissipation and fell under the total influence of his omnipotent ministers Sosybios and Agathocles; the active foreign policy of his predecessors was now abandoned (Polyb. 5.34.3–10). But the young kings in both Macedonia and Asia, Philip V and Antiochus III, were deeply engaged on other fronts: in 215 BCE Philip signed his unfortunate treaty with Hannibal and became entangled in a difficult war with Rome and her Greek allies, while Antiochus, after his victory against Achaeus in Asia Minor, set out on his long Eastern “Anabasis” (212–205 BCE), reestablishing successfully Seleucid rule over the Upper Satrapies. In these circumstances the South Thracian littoral seems to have remained under the nominal control of the Ptolemies. However, the weakening of Egypt’s maritime supremacy brought about the rise of new powers in the Aegean, where Pergamum and Rhodes became in the late third century important figures in regional politics.

During the initial years of the reign of Ptolemy IV, the Celtic kingdom in Thrace came to an end amidst circumstances of which we are ignorant. Under the last king Cavarus it had retained some political might and importance. Polybios mentions briefly that “the kingdom of the Celts and their whole tribe were eradicated by the Thracians” (Polyb. 4.46). The activation of the Thracians and the passive line of Alexandria seem to have forced the coastal Greek cities to look elsewhere for allies capable of improving their security; the alliance of Lysimachia with the Aetolians should date from this time (Polyb. 15.23.9; 18.3.11).

Probably in 211 BCE Philip V undertook a major campaign against his nearest Thracian neighbors, the Maedi in the middle Strymon valley. They often raided Macedonian territory for plunder and were particularly annoying during the war which the king was leading in Greece. The country of the

Maedi was devastated and their capital city, Iamphorina, was taken after a siege (T. Liv. 26.25.6–8, 15). The Maedi, however, seem to have remained a constant threat at the northern border of Macedonia (Polyb. 10.41.4; T. Liv. 28.5.7).

Several years later Philip started building in the docks of Cassandrea in Chalcidice a large fleet, which was meant to become the principal tool of his new Aegean policy. Thus, even before the end of the First Macedonian War, he had started to shift his plans toward the East. After signing the peace with the Romans in Phoenice in 205 BCE he could devote his whole potential to the new eastern projects. The fragmentary evidence in Polybius and Livy unfortunately does not permit the detailed reconstruction of the ensuing events. The quotations from book 13 of Polybius in Stephanus Byzantinus, for example, show that it contained the description of some significant operations in Eastern Thrace in either 205 or 204 BCE; they seem to reflect a major campaign of Philip that affected Cabyle and the country of the Astii, Adrane, the tribe of the Digerri, and the obscure “plain of Ares” (Polyb. 13.10).

The death of Ptolemy Philopator and the accession of the young Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180 BCE) to the throne in Alexandria gave Philip V and Antiochus III the chance to coordinate their efforts and undertake simultaneous attacks on the enfeebled external possessions of the Ptolemies (Polyb. 3.2.8; 15.20.1–8; 16.1.9; T. Liv. 31.14.5; App., Mac. 4; Justin. 30.2.8). The agreement gave Antiochus a free hand for actions in Coelesyria, Cyprus, Cilicia, and Lycia, while Philip could operate in Thrace, western Asia Minor, and the Aegean islands. The large-scale aggressive operations of Philip in the last years of the third century changed completely the situation in Southern Thrace and the whole Aegean area. In 202 Philip engaged his new fleet in a large campaign in the Propontis. He took Lysimachia and sent away the Aetolian strategos and garrison. Perinthus and Chalcedon fell into his hands. The Anatolian cities of Cius and Myrlea, which offered resistance, were sacked and destroyed; their citizens were sold into slavery, and their lands were ceded to Philip’s ally, the Bithynian king Prusias (Polyb. 15.21.3–23.10; 18.2.4, 3.11; Strabo 12.6.3). On the way back from the Propontis, Philip’s fleet gained possession of Thasos by deceit; a Macedonian garrison was established there (Polyb. 15.24.1–3; 18.44.4, 48.2; T. Liv. 33.30.3).

After a long campaign in Asia, directed against Pergamum, the Rhodian peraea and the remaining Ptolemaic possessions there, still including Miletus, Samos, and parts of Caria (Errington 1990, 197), in 200 BCE Philip V again invaded Southern Thrace with considerable land and sea forces. According to Livy, he successfully attacked Maronea with his ships, only 2000 light infantry, and 200 cavalry. Aenus was taken after a long and violent siege because of the defection of the Ptolemaic governor Callimedes. Then, one after the other, Philip took the fortresses of Cypsela, Doriscos, and Serreion. In the Chersonese, the cities Elaeus, Alopekonnos, Callipolis, and Maditos

together with several smaller fortresses surrendered without opposition (T. Liv. 31.16.3–6). Among the cities seized either on this occasion or in the earlier campaign in the Propontis were also Sestos in the Thracian Chersonese and Hephaestia on the isle of Lemnos (T. Liv. 32.33.6; Polyb. 18.48.2). Crossing the Hellespont, the Macedonian king also besieged and took Abydos on the Asiatic coast; the citizens, abandoned by their allies, King Attalus of Pergamum and Rhodes, preferred death to slavery and killed themselves to the last man (Polyb. 16.29–34; 18.44.4; T. Liv. 31.16.6–18.9; 33.30.3).

During the Second Macedonian War that started soon afterward, Philip must have had to pull some of his garrisons out of the occupied cities in Thrace in order to gather his best forces against the Romans. During the talks on the coast of the Malian gulf in the winter of 197 BCE, he justified his occupation of the cities in Thrace with the danger from the Thracians and gave as an example the seizure and sacking of Lysimachia by unnamed Thracians after the withdrawal of the Macedonian garrison from the city (Polyb. 18.4.5–6; T. Liv. 32.34.6; 33.38.11). The Romans were at that time demanding that Philip return to Ptolemy V all cities that he occupied after the death of Philopator, evidently including those in Thrace (Polyb. 18.1.14; T. Liv. 32.33.4). After the battle at Cynoscephalae, however, the Roman delegation sent by the Senate to determine the conditions imposed on Philip decided that the Greek cities in Europe and Asia, which Philip was to evacuate immediately, had to be handed over temporarily to the Romans (T. Liv. 33.30.2). At the Isthmian games of 196 BCE, Titus Quinctius Flaminius proclaimed publicly the return of their freedom and independence (T. Liv. 33.32.5–6).

The occasion was seized by Philip's former ally Antiochus the Great. In the same year of 196 BCE he invaded and occupied most of the southern and western coasts of Asia Minor and then crossed into Europe, took the cities of the Chersonese that had been evacuated by the Macedonian garrisons, and started to rebuild Lysimachia, which was in ruins after the recent Thracian raid. In order to consolidate his position in the newly taken coastal area, he also invaded the lands of the neighboring Thracian tribes in the interior and ravaged them (T. Liv. 33.38.8–14; Diod. 28.12, 15; 29.5; App. Syr. 3–4; Dio Cass., Boissevain 3.284 = Zonaras, Epit. 9.18.11). Antiochus declared to the Roman delegation, which had arrived in Lysimachia, that, as a descendant of Seleucus Nicator, he considered himself the rightful heir of the European realm of Lysimachus, which, after his defeat and death at Koroupedion, had passed into the ownership of the victor (Polyb. 18.51.3–8; T. Liv. 33.40.1–6; 34.58.4–6; App., Syr. 10–13). In 195 BCE Antiochus continued his campaigns in Thrace, taking with his army new territories and "liberating" the Greek cities from the Thracians. The extent of his advance to the west along the northern Aegean coast remains indefinite, although his garrisons were established then in Aenus and Maronea (T. Liv. 37.60.7); in the east his sphere of influence reached Byzantium, where, according to Appian,

Antiochus gained the gratitude of the citizens with his great favors (App., Syr. 21–22).

The authority of Antiochus III in Southern Thrace was of short duration, for after suffering defeats at the hands of the Romans on land (at Thermopylae in April 191 BCE) and at sea (near Coricos in September 191 and at Mionesos during the next year), he hastened to retreat with all his forces to Asia, frightened that the Roman fleet could block his retreat through the Straits, and leaving in Lysimachia great quantities of supplies and ammunition prepared for the war. The Roman army led by the consul Lucius Cornelius Scipio and his elder brother, the famous Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, and escorted by the Macedonian king Philip who remained faithful to the Romans in this conflict, crossed unimpeded through Southern Thrace and passed into Asia, where late in 190 the forces of Antiochus were defeated in a decisive battle near Magnesia (Polyb. 20–21; T. Liv. 36–37; App., Syr. 1–44).

Among the other clauses of the post-war arrangement in 188 BCE, the Roman commission sent by the Senate to Asia decreed that the Thracian Chersonese with Lysimachia and all fortifications, villages, and districts in Thrace, which were under the rule of Antiochus, should be ceded to King Eumenes II of Pergamum (Polyb. 21.46.9; T. Liv. 38.39.14). As the places were not named one by one in the decision, Philip V tried to profit from the uncertainty and hastened to reoccupy with garrisons the coastal cities as far as the Hebros, including Maronea and Aenus (T. Liv. 39.23.13, 24.6–9, 27.1–10, 28.11–12). A part of their population was banished and Thracians and other barbarians were settled in their place (Polyb. 22.9.1–2; 23.10.4–5; T. Liv. 39.24.6; 40.3.3–4). In 185 BCE the Romans ordered Philip to evacuate his garrisons and the offended king instigated a Thracian raid on Maronea, during which many citizens were killed (Polyb. 22.17.1–18.6; T. Liv. 39.29.2, 33.4, 34.1–2). He also gave vent to his anger in a series of campaigns into the Thracian interior; during one of these, undertaken under the pretext of defending Byzantium, the otherwise unknown Thracian king Amadocos was taken prisoner in the Propontis area (Polyb. 22.18.12; T. Liv. 39.35.4). Another incursion was directed against the Odrysae, Dentheletae, and Bessi in 184 or 183 BCE (Polyb. 23.8.1–7; T. Liv. 39.53.12–14; for the date see Walbank 1967, 334; Hammond and Walbank 1988, 468). The Macedonian king captured Philippopolis on the upper Hebros and established a garrison in the city, but after the retreat of his army this was soon driven away by the Odrysae. A few years later in 181 BCE, Philip undertook another expedition in the Thracian interior. One of his aims was to climb the highest peak of Mount Haemus (in this case probably the Rila, not the Stara Planina) in order to get an aerial view of the land routes from Macedonia to Italy; the ascent was achieved despite the great difficulties, but brought no results because of the bad weather. Having descended from the mountain, Philip raided the lands of his allies the Dentheletae to raise supplies for the army and then attacked

once again his permanent foes the Maedi, besieging and taking their fortified town Petra (T. Liv. 40.21–22).

During the second century, a number of autonomous Thracian tribes seem to have played an increasingly important role in the political developments in the Northern Aegean coastal region and on the Macedonian frontier. Already in 188 BCE the difficult return of the Roman army through Southern Thrace gave a clear demonstration of the Thracian upsurge: the combined forces of four Thracian tribes, the Astae, Caeni, Maduateni, and Coreli (Corpili?), set up an ambush and attacked the Romans near Cypsela, successfully carrying off most of the baggage train with the spoils from the war in Asia (T. Liv. 38.40–41; App., *Syr.* 224–228). The names of these tribes are different from those previously known to Xenophon in the same area in the early fourth century, a phenomenon that might reflect changes connected in one way or another with the Celtic invasion in the third century. The Sapaei and Trausi in the Southern Rhodopes and the Maedi, Dentheleti, and Bessi in the west also receive casual notice in this age and seem to have been politically active and independent. All this leaves for the Odrysian kingdom a restricted territory in parts of the upper Hebros plain and the upper Tonzos valley, which certainly incorporated the area of Philippopolis. To the west, the Odrysian kingdom bordered on the lands of the Bessi situated roughly between modern Dupnitsa and Pazardjik. The situation in the east remains unclear; the lands between the river Tonzos and the Bay of Burgas may have been in Odrysian hands or under the rising power of the Astae whose main area was in the Strandja Mountain to the south. Nevertheless, the Odrysian kingdom seems to have remained the foremost political and military power of ancient Thrace. In the time of Philip V, it must have had as a king Seuthes (IV), the father of Cotys the contemporary of Perseus (T. Liv. 45.51.10; cf. Strazzulla 1901, 373–374), but the historical tradition has not preserved any pertinent details about his reign.

Philip V had concluded an alliance with the Bastarnae, a Celtic or Germanic warrior tribe established on the Lower Danube; he planned to settle them in Dardania and later use them for an invasion of Italy. It was only after his death in 179 BCE that they moved with a great army through the main part of Thrace. They entered into a conflict with the Thracians, some of whom took refuge on a mountain called Donuca (Rila?); the Bastarnae tried to attack them, but were defeated after an unexpected thunderstorm and then split in two: a part returned by way of Apollonia and Mesambria, while 30,000 men led by the chief Clondicus went on to plunder the lands of the Dardanians (T. Liv. 40.57–58).

After the death of Philip in 179 BCE, Abrupolis, a king of the Sapaei and friend of the Romans, invaded the Pangaeum area, but was defeated by Philip's heir Perseus who successfully drove him out of his kingdom. A dedicatory inscription from Amphipolis mentions, with a suggestive plural,

military campaigns of Perseus in Thrace (τῶν εἰς Θράκιην στρατειῶν, see Voutiras 1986). The Romans initially left the Abrupolis incident without consequences, but later demanded his restoration (T. Liv. 42.13.6; Paus. 7.10.6; App., Mac. 11.2; Diod. 29.33; cf. Wilcken 1893); this was to become the *casus belli* for the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BCE). In 172 BCE, just before the eruption of the war, a Thracian delegation representing the tribes of the Maedi, Astae, and “Cepnati” (the last possibly corrupted from the name of either the Corpili or the Caeni) came to Rome to seek alliance and friendship with the Romans (T. Liv. 42.19.6–8). The Odrysian king Cotys, the son of Seuthes, on the other hand chose the side of Perseus, becoming his most valued ally in this war. Polybius has left a eulogy about the high qualities and virtues of Cotys (Polyb. 27.12; Diod. 30.3; cf. Strazzulla 1901, 374–380, Kahrstedt 1922, 1552, no. 2). In the very first major engagement with the Romans, at Callinicus in 171 BCE, the Odrysians fought valiantly and contributed to the Macedonian victory (T. Liv. 42.57.6, 58.6, 59.2–3). Not long after that, however, another Thracian king, Autlesbis, invaded the domain of Cotys with the help of an Attalid commander, and Cotys and his Thracians were dismissed honorably by the Macedonian king (T. Liv. 42.67.4–5; cf. Meloni 1953, 248–249).

It was sometime before Pydna that Perseus called as allies the Bastarnae of Clondicus. An army of 20,000 Bastarnae reached Desudaba in the lands of the Maedi, but after Perseus hesitated to pay them the promised sum of 500 talents, they withdrew without further negotiation (T. Liv. 44.26–27). In a rare notice about one of the Thracian tribes integrated from long ago in the Macedonian kingdom, Livy mentions that after the disaster at Pydna, Perseus had placed his last hopes on help from the Bisaltae (44.45.8).

The Odrysian king Cotys seems to have participated in the battle of Pydna, for Livy mentions his name and Odrysian cavalry in his account (44.42.2). Hiding in Samothrace after his defeat, Perseus tried unsuccessfully to escape to the kingdom of his ally (T. Liv. 45.6.2). Cotys had left a son, Bithys, as hostage at the Macedonian court; this son was captured by the Romans and sent to Italy together with Perseus and his family. Cotys sent a delegation to Rome and received his son and Roman pardon; the Odrysians were to become henceforth staunch Roman allies and supporters (Polyb. 30.17; T. Liv. 45.42.6–12). It would be in this new role of Roman ally that Cotys was allowed to acquire new territories, presumably from the Sapaei: according to a decree of Abdera dated to about 166 BCE, he was encroaching on the territory of the city, either along the Aegean coast or through the Rhodope Mountains (SIG²³, no. 656; cf. Danov 1979, 76–77; Loukopoulou 1987, 65–66; Loukopoulou et al. 2005, E5). In the post-war arrangements of 167 BCE, the Romans, however, specifically included the Thracian littoral between the Nestos and the Hebros in the first Macedonian meris, while Abdera, Maroneia, and Aenos were proclaimed free allied cities (T. Liv. 45.29.5–7;

Diod. 31.8.8).

In 150 or 149 BCE the pretender for the Macedonian throne Andriscus (pseudo-Philip) passed through Thrace on his way from Asia to Macedonia and gained the support of some local rulers, among whom Diodorus (32 fr. 15) mentions one Teres, who was married to a daughter of Philip V, and another one called Barsabas. After his defeat at the hands of the praetor Q. Caecilius Metellus in 148 BCE, Andriscus escaped to one of these Thracian kings, who however handed him over to the Romans. It can only be hypothesized whether this Teres was the contemporary Odrysian king, as the parallels of his name seem to suggest (in such a case he would have been a successor of Cotys), or where the kingdom of the mysterious Barsabas was situated.

In Asia Minor the son of Ziaelas, Prusias I Cholos reigned from 228 to 182 BCE, a period of prosperity for Bithynia (Habicht 1957, 1086–1107, no. 1; Gabelko 2005, 226–296). He married a daughter of Demetrius II, Apama, and in a succession of wars with his neighbors Byzantium, Pergamum, Heracleia, and the Galatians, enlarged the territory of his kingdom. In 202 as an ally of Philip V he received from the latter the cities of Cius and Myrlea, resettled them and gave them the names of Prusias and Apamea. Prusias gave sanctuary to Hannibal, but remained neutral in the First Syrian War.

His son, Prusias II Cynegos, reigned from 182 to 149 BCE (Habicht 1957, 1107–1127; Gabelko 2005, 297–343). He inherited the name of his father, but not his good qualities. He fought unsuccessfully against Pergamum and in the end was ousted by his own son Nicomedes.

6.3 From the Establishment of the Roman Province of Macedonia to the Beginning of the Third Mithridatic War, 148–73 BCE

The period comprising the second half of the second and the first quarter of the first century BCE is again poorly represented in the preserved historical tradition. The loss of the main contemporary historians (Posidonius, Sisenna) and of the relevant portions of later rather detailed histories like those of Diodorus, Livy, and Cassius Dio has left us, aside from casual fragments, with late and often unreliable abridgements in the works of authors like Valerius Maximus, Annaeus Florus, Granius Licinianus, Julius Obsequens, Eutropius, Rufus Festus, among others.

With the establishment of the Roman province of Macedonia in 148 BCE, the southern Thracian littoral, which had been included in the first meris as far as the Hebros River in the east, remained under the jurisdiction of the provincial governors. The area to the east of Aenos with the Thracian Chersonese, which the Romans had handed over to their ally Pergamum, became now the scene

of violent action with the attempt of Attalus II (159–139 BCE) to spread his influence beyond the peninsula. The fearful stories about his foes, the kings of the Caeni, Diegylis and Zibelmios, are among the few relevant pieces of information about Thrace in the third quarter of the second century BCE. These were father and son, both stigmatized as extremely vicious and bloodthirsty. Diegylis, who could have been the successor of Autlesbis, had captured and razed Lysimachia in an assault on the Pergamene possessions, but in the end, probably about 145 BCE, he was defeated by the army of Attalus (Strabo 13.4.2; Trog., Prol. 36; cf. Willrich 1905; Loukopoulou 1987, 69–71). He seems to have perished in a coup, and his son Zibelmios vented his revenge on his own subjects, until in the end these revolted and killed him (Diod. 33 fr. 14–15; 34 fr. 12; cf. Ziegler 1972). The Thracian Chersonese and the conquered lands of the Caeni were administered in this period as a separate strategy (an administrative division in the care of a strategos) of the Pergamene kingdom, known from inscriptions as “the strategy of the Chersonese and the Thraceward places” (στρατηγία τῆς Χερσονήσου καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Θράκην τόπων, cf. Bengtson 1944, 209–211).

Bithynia was ruled in the third quarter of the second century by Nicomedes II Epiphanes (149–127 BCE). Having spent his youth in Rome, he ousted his father Prusias with the help of Attalus II and remained a staunch Roman ally for the length of his successful reign (Geyer 1936, 494–496, no. 4; Gabelko 2005, 335–343).

The death of Attalus III in 133 BCE and the appropriation of the Pergamene kingdom by the Romans changed radically the situation on the southern Thracian littoral. This became now the vital link between Macedonia and the new province of Asia established in 129 BCE. The Roman road built along the coast of Thrace (the Aegean part of the Via Militaris or Via Egnatia) became a major factor for the new political stability established now in this troubled area. However for some time to come the Roman possessions along the southern Thracian littoral seem not to have gone beyond the Hebros in the east. It was somewhere in this area that a local king, Mostis, known mainly from his coinage, had his possessions in the last quarter of the second century BCE (Youroukova 1976, 34–38; 1992, 165–172; Loukopoulou 1987, 80–81).

There is no adequate information about the other contemporary Thracian principalities – the kingdoms of the Odrysae, the Astae, the Sapaei, possibly others. Mostis could have been the king of any of these, enlarging temporarily his domain at the expense of the former Attalid possessions, very probably as a Roman ally. Vincenzo Strazzulla had once suggested (1902, 22) that the kings of the Caeni, Diegylis and Zibelmios, had seized power over the Odrysian kingdom, and that later Rhescuporis the father of Cotys restored its independence, but this remains purely conjectural, including the tribal attribution of Rhescuporis and Cotys (not Odrysians, but Sapaeans according to some modern scholars). A Mesambrian proxeny decree from the middle (?)

of the second century mentions an Astaeon notable, Dem...tes, the son of Dezos, bearing witness to the viable relations between the Greek polis and the elite of the tribal kingdom of the Astae (IGBulg 1², no. 312; cf. Danov 1979, 106).

The Roman province of Macedonia inherited from its predecessor, the Antigonid kingdom, its troubled relations with the Thracian and non-Thracian tribes and kingdoms of the interior. These were keen on plunder and, attracted by the wealth of the province, often raided its territory. The Roman authorities retaliated with numerous punitive expeditions, but these proved unable to put a permanent end to the incursions (for a general survey of the events see Walbank 1981; Tacheva 1997, 61–83). A major conflict is evidenced by an inscription from Lete which can be dated reliably to 119 BCE (SIG 2³, no. 700; cf. Cuntz 1918; Papazoglu 1978, 291 n. 62; Kallet-Marx 1995, 38; Brennan 2000, 521–522). This was started by the Celtic Scordisci who invaded Macedonia, killed the praetor Sextus Pompeius in battle, and were repulsed only with great difficulty by his quaestor Marcus Annius; a second devastating inroad followed, in which the Scordisci were joined by the Thracian Maedi under their king Tipas.

The tension created by new tribal incursions in the following years led to a period in which Macedonia was entrusted to governors of consular rank. The first of these, C. Porcius Cato, lost his whole army in battle with the barbarians in 114 BCE (T. Liv. per. 63; Flor. 1.39.4; Ruf. Fest., Brev. 9.1; cf. Brennan 2000, 522), while both his successors, the consuls for 113 and 112 C. Caecilius Metellus Caprarius and M. Livius Drusus, won triumphs for presumably important victories over them (Degrassi 1947, 84–85, 561; cf. Vell. Pat. 2.8.2; Eutrop. 4.25.1). Marcus Minucius Rufus, the fourth consul in a row to govern Macedonia, remained in the province for five years between 110 and 106 BCE (Münzer 1962; Broughton 1951, 543–544; Sarikakis 1971, 60–62). A couple of honorific decrees from Delphi and Europos mention two victorious wars of Minucius, one against the Scordisci and the other against the Bessi and other Thracians (Vatin 1967; Bousquet 1991, 177–179). These wars, which won Minucius a triumph in Rome after his return, are casually noticed in the literary sources, which allude consistently to a large winter battle, presumably against the Bessi, at the frozen river Hebros (T. Liv. per. 65; Flor. 1.39.5; Ruf. Fest., Brev. 9.2; Amm. Marc. 27.4.10; Eutrop. 4.27.5; Jord., Rom. 219).

The king Mostis mentioned above could have been among the enemies whom the Roman praetor T. Didius fought in Thrace in 101 or 100 BCE, and would have lost territory when the latter incorporated the Thracian Chersonese and the lands of the Caeni as far as Byzantium into the Roman province of Macedonia (Loukopoulou 1987, 73–81). However, the long series of the coins of Mostis suggests that he survived these events and continued to rule an indefinite territory in the southeast of Thrace, perhaps further inland, early in

the first century BCE.

A casual mention in Florus (1.39) suggests that a (Manlius?) Vulso, presumably another provincial governor of Macedonia, “penetrated the Rhodope and the Haemus”; the passage of Florus is a list of undated Roman campaigns in Thrace, in which Vulso is placed after Minucius (Rufus) and before (C. Scribonius) Curio, Appius (Claudius Pulcher), and (M. Terentius Varro) Lucullus, thus somewhere between 106 and 78 BCE, which is not enough to connect him with the equally uninformative passage of Julius Obsequens (108) mentioning a Roman victory over the Maedi and Dardanians in 97 BCE, although such an identification has been suggested (Gerov 1961, 171; Yordanov 1978, 23; Tacheva 1997, 66).

In Bithynia, the long rule of Nicomedes III Euergetes (127–94 BCE) was a period of comparative prosperity and stability. He was for some time the ally of Mithridates Eupator, as they tried to annex Paphlagonia and Cappadocia together, then quarreled with each other and finally were forced by the Romans to evacuate all their recent territorial acquisitions (Geyer 1936, 496–497, no. 5; Gabelko 2005, 344–372).

The Roman victories in Thrace between 114 and 97 BCE evidently did not have any long-lasting effect; the very fact of the continuing efforts to restrain the barbarians is in itself a proof of their partial and inconclusive character. During the long stay of the propraetor C. Sentius Saturninus in Macedonia between 93 and 87 BCE (Brennan 2000, 525), the northern frontier of the province remained extremely unstable. New Thracian incursions in Macedonia are mentioned by Julius Obsequens (113) in 92 BCE and twice in the *periochae* of Livy (74, 76) for the years of the Social War, 90–88 BCE.

A new factor was added to the already critical situation in the region with the anti-Roman propaganda of Mithridates Eupator; he won to his cause many of the Thracians, and most or all of the Greek cities on the Pontic coast (see Gaggero 1978). A fragment of Cassius Dio (fr. 101.2) mentions, out of context, that the Thracians, instigated by Mithridates, had made an incursion reaching as far as Epirus and the sanctuary at Dodona, where they sacked the temple of Zeus. Paulus Orosius (5.18.30) adds more details about presumably this same invasion; in his version a Thracian king, Sothimus, invaded Macedonia in 88 BCE with a large army and reached Greece, until in the end he was repelled by the praetor C. Sentius (Saturninus) and returned to his own kingdom. It has been suggested that Sothimus was the king of the Maedi (Detschew 1957, 465; Gerov 1961, 172; Yordanov 1978, 24; Walbank 1981, 16; Tacheva 1997, 67), but this remains purely conjectural. It is probably to these same events that Cicero refers in his invective against Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus: he mentions “a general revolt of the barbarians” during the office of the praetor C. Sentius, when the province was saved by the Dentheletae who remained loyal to Rome (Cic., in Pis. 84). It remains unclear in what way the Dentheletae contributed to the success of the Roman praetor,

maybe with a treacherous attack on the territory of their neighbors while these were away on their plundering raid? The Dentheletae were not the only Thracians who remained true to their Roman allegiance. Diodorus (37.5a) tells the story of an abortive attempt at a Macedonian uprising, probably also inspired by Mithridatic propaganda, which was suppressed with the timely interference of a Thracian king, Cotys, who might have been an Odrysian or, as has recently been suggested, a Sapaeian ruler. In the battles of Chaeronea and Orchomenos in 86 BCE Odrysian cavalry fought on the side of Sulla; it had been sent by king Sadalas, and was commanded by an Odrysian aristocrat, Amadokos the son of Teres (Holleaux 1919). There were, however, numerous Thracian allies also in the land armies of Mithridates acting in Europe, and a commander, Dromichaetes, seems by his name to have commanded a Getic contingent (App., *Mithr.* 32, 41).

Further Thracian incursions in Macedonia are mentioned in the *periochae* of Livy describing the events of 87 and 86 BCE (T. Liv. *per.* 81, 82). It remains impossible to coordinate these pieces of information with the fast unrolling string of events in southern Thrace and Macedonia. Probably in 87 BCE, while the Mithridatic forces of Archelaus and Metrophanes were having their first encounters with the advancing army of Sulla in Greece, an enormous land army led by the king's son Ariarathes (Arcathias) and the general Taxiles crossed the Straits into Thrace and advanced into Macedonia, easily overcoming the feeble forces (only two legions) of the praetor Sentius (App., *Mithr.* 35, 41; Plut., *Sulla* 11; Memnon 32). Appian mentions that Ariarathes took the time to appoint satraps over the conquered territories; he seems to have spent the winter of 87 BCE in Macedonia. It has been suggested that Ariarathes must have taken the view that the purpose of his mission was to create a kingdom for himself in Thrace and Macedonia (Reinach 1890, 160–161, 166–167; Rostovtzeff and Ormerod 1932, 248).

Early in 86 BCE, the great army of Ariarathes moved south, too late to help besieged Athens and Piraeus, which both fell to Sulla. In the summer of that year, with his two decisive victories at Chaeronea and Orchomenos, Sulla turned the tide of the First Mithridatic War. Some interesting events occurred in the meantime elsewhere. In the north, evacuated by the bulk of the Mithridatic forces, there now appeared a new Roman army sent by the Marian regime and led by the suffect consul L. Valerius Flaccus. The army of Flaccus passed through Macedonia and Thrace and crossed into Asia; the soldiers eventually mutinied against their commander, who was replaced by the legate Fimbria. The situation that remained behind in Macedonia and Thrace is not attested in the preserved historical narratives.

It would have been in the same year, 86 BCE, that a major invasion by three northern tribes, the Scordisci, the Maedi, and the Dardanians, reached the sanctuary of Delphi in Greece, which was plundered and burnt (Plut., *Numa* 9.6; App., *Illyr.* 1.5; Euseb., *Chron.* 2.133). Against the background of the

dramatic events of that year, the raid could be seen as an anti-Roman diverting operation in the rear of Sulla, probably instigated by Mithridatic agents. The date (controversial in modern literature, see Papazoglu 1978, 315–323) is inferred from the figure of the Roman general who went on to punish the perpetrators; Appian gives his name as Lucius Scipio and he is easily identifiable with the Marian consul of 83 BCE, Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus (Broughton 1952, 54, 58, 61; Brennan 2000, 527–528). According to Appian, Scipio defeated thoroughly the Scordisci, but was bribed with temple gold by the Maedi and Dardanians and left them unpunished; he would have been a governor of Macedonia installed by the Marian government in Rome after the resumption of Roman control over the province.

Early in 85 BCE, Sulla moved to the north with his army; this would have been the real reason for the unfinished operation of L. Scipio that had left the Maedi and Dardanians unpunished: the Marian governor would have had to retreat at the advance of Sulla, probably returning to Italy for good. While awaiting in Macedonia the result of the preliminary talks with Mithridates, which were entrusted to Archelaus, Sulla himself went on a punitive expedition against some variously attested Thracian tribes, among whom the Maedi seem the most certain (T. Liv. per. 83; App., Mithr. 55; Eutrop., Brev. 5.7.1; Plut., Sulla 23). And again, while Sulla was signing the treaty with Mithridates in Dardanos later in the same year, his legate Hortensius made another raid on the Maedi and Dardanians (Gran. Licinian. 35.78–81). These operations were presumably meant to finish the job started by Scipio of punishing the pro-Mithridatic tribes for their part in the war.

The events in Thrace in the period between the treaty of Dardanos and the start of the Third Mithridatic War (85–73 BCE) are very vaguely known. The Odrysian king Sadalas remained a Roman ally (cf. Cic., Ver. 2.1.63). His contested identification with the Sadalas mentioned in a dedicatory royal inscription from Byzie (IGR 1.775) raises the question of Odrysian-Astaeian relations, which remain enigmatic.

Roman military expeditions penetrated deeper and deeper into the Thracian interior. About 76 BCE, Appius Claudius Pulcher fought in the Rhodope Mountains and later died in his province (T. Liv. per. 91; Sall., Hist. 2.36–37; Flor. 1.38.6; Eutrop. 6.2.1; Ruf. Fest. 9.2; Oros. 5.23.19). The next governor of Macedonia, Gaius Scribonius Curio, reached the Thracian sector of the river Danube between 75 and 73 BCE (T. Liv. per. 92, 95; Sall., Hist. 2.80, 3.49–50; Frontin., Strat. 4.1.43; Ruf. Fest. 7.5; Flor. 1.39.6; Eutrop. 6.2.2; Oros. 5.23.20; Amm. Marc. 29.5.22; Jord., Rom. 216; Jul. Obseq. 59).

In Asia, Nicomedes IV Philopator (94–74 BCE) was the last king of the Bithynian royal dynasty (Geyer 1936, 497–499, no. 6; Gabelko 2005, 372–414). He was defeated and ousted from his kingdom by Mithridates Eupator at the start of the First Mithridatic War (88 BCE), then reinstalled by the Romans with the peace of Dardanos (85 BCE). Bithynia practically became a

Roman protectorate, and at his death in 74 BCE the childless Nicomedes bequeathed his domain to the Romans. Bithynia thenceforth became a Roman province.

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Guide to Further Reading

The References mention most of the relevant existing publications bearing directly on Thracian history in the period discussed. Further reading could be suggested on the broader aspects of the history of the Hellenistic world, of which Thrace formed an integral part. Modern scholarship on the Hellenistic age is vast; most of the important publications, however, can easily be found in the extensive and well-organized bibliographies of the following general

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Chapter 7

Roman Thrace

Ivaylo Lozanov

7.1 Introduction

Thracian territories fell into the Roman sphere of political interest during the clash between Rome and the Macedonian Antigonids. Having reduced Macedonia to a province in 148 BCE, the Roman government inherited a security problem on the long, vulnerable tract from the Rhodope mountains down to the Aegean coast. With the exception of the Greek cities on the littoral, Thracian territory between the lower reaches of the Nestus and Hebrus rivers was still unsettled and required management by force and persuasion. By the second half of the second century BCE and for the next hundred years the Roman presence was felt mostly on the narrow strip along the military road (Via Egnatia) that extended to the Thracian Chersonese. The rest of this zone, however, was not exposed to any degree of provincial integration and, until the last quarter of the first century BCE, Thraco-Roman relations were not defined by longstanding policy. Thrace served mostly as a source of raw materials and manpower in the political struggles of Rome. With few exceptions ad hoc decisions and random alliances dominated the scene.

Under Augustus, the Thracian Chersonese was transformed into personal property of the imperial family; many of the old Greek cities retained their self-government. Augustan rule (27 BCE–14 CE) brought a more settled pattern of political cooperation with the Thracian dynasts, which eventually resulted in the creation of a “client” kingdom that merged the ambitions of the most conspicuous royal families – Sapaeian, Odrysian, and Astaeian – into a unified state, friendly to Rome. A considerable part of the Thracian plain, including territory along the western Black Sea coast down to the Propontis, was attached to the newly created kingdom. At approximately the same time or soon after a new zone for security was established on the lower Danube between the Timachus (Timok) and Oescus (Iskar) valleys, with the eventual deployment of a permanent military garrison of at least two legions under the command of the Macedonian governor. The beginnings of what would later become provincia Moesia were thus set forth. In late Republican and early Imperial times the lands north of the Danube – between the Carpathian ridge and the lower reaches of the Dniester, and inhabited in historical times by Thracian tribes – saw the political consolidation of the Getae and the Daci. Various political factors turned them into resistant Roman opponents until they were conquered by the emperor Trajan (106 CE). The topic requires detailed treatment elsewhere and so will be discussed only briefly here.

In 45–46 CE during the reign of Claudius, the entire territory extending from the right bank of the lower Danube down to the Aegean shore came under provincial administration. Thracia was constituted mainly on the territory of the former “client” kingdom. Initially the border with Moesia was somewhere on the Iatrus (Yantra) river, but under Vespasian Moesia was expanded to cover the whole south bank of the Danube from Singidunum (Belgrade) to the Black Sea. Up to the late third century the boundary of Moesia (known by 86 CE as Lower Moesia) with Thracia was altered at least twice – in 136 and 193 CE – to uphold military control and economic prosperity. The southwest border with Macedonia was redrawn on the right bank of the Nestus. The Greek cities of Abdera, Maroneia, and Aenus kept their free status, although they formally belonged to Thracia. The adjacent islands of Imbros, Samothrace, and Thasos were treated similarly, with the latter two preserving at least part of their possessions on the mainland. The north shore of Propontis developed into the most thriving provincial area, where Perinthus became the headquarters of the Thracian governor. Military and economic considerations dictated its promotion from an outlet for sea-borne trade to a major administrative center with a large territory in the interior. The neighboring city of Byzantium enjoyed free status at least until the time of Vespasian, but, as a result of subsequent changes in the second century CE, we find the city incorporated into the province of Bithynia. With minor alterations the provincial boundaries of Moesia and Thracia remained stable until the early 270s CE, when the emperor Aurelian evacuated Dacia and created two homonymous provinces south of the Danube. Dacia Ripensis with its capital Ratiaria was detached from Upper Moesia, whereas Dacia Mediterranea was constituted mainly out of the former territories of Serdica and Pautalia. Further administrative reforms by Diocletian (284–305 CE) and Constantine the Great (306–337 CE) created six new provinces merged into a single superior unit – the Thracian diocese – to take the place of Thrace and Lower Moesia.

7.2 Prelude to the Provinces: Roman Thrace up to the Time of Augustus

In inheriting Attalid possessions in southeastern Thrace, Rome faced the burden by 129 BCE of securing control of the land, goods, and supplies through Propontis and Asia. The former Pergamene district in the Chersonese and adjacent places was declared Roman provincial territory. The extension of the military road (Via Egnatia) up to Kypsela on the left bank of the Hebrus presumably occurred at the same time. The next decades showed to the Republican government the vital need to acquire a deeper base in that area. The famous *Lex de provinciis praetoriis* known from two Greek copies found at Delphi and Knidos (Crawford 1996, no. 12) brings notice of the praetor T. Didius, who in 101 or 100 BCE conquered the tribal land of the Caeni, thus

eliminating a recurrent threat to the region. Consequently a new military and administrative zone called *eparcheia Chersonesos te Kainike* was created as an attachment to Macedonia (Walbank 1983; Loukopoulou 1989, 73–81). Detailed provisions in the law guaranteed effective administration for the “Caenic district” (*regio Caenica?*) running northwest of the Chersonese.

A new era was marked by the wars with Mithridates VI. The king of Pontus gradually imposed his sway on Colchis and expanded his influence through political alliances with the Greek colonies on the shores of the Black Sea. Epigraphic documents and coins suggest tighter political cooperation between Mithridates, the western Pontic cities, and some Thracian dynasts and tribes farther inland by the early 80s BCE. Such evidence helps to explain the ease with which the king’s army broke into Roman provincial territory from the North Aegean coast down to Boeotia in 88–87 BCE. On the Roman side Sulla reportedly struck alliances with the Odrysaе and the Denthelatae, but this military and diplomatic counter-offensive had limited success. It took the following decade to restore Roman control of Macedonia and her northern and eastern boundaries. By 77–73 BCE Macedonian governors were launching extended military campaigns in the north to eliminate any combined efforts by Rome’s bitter enemies, the Maedi and Dardani, and to prevent further coalitions with the Pontic ruler.

In 72 BCE after Mithridates’ forces retreated to Bithynia, the “Thracian theater” was assigned to the Macedonian governor M. Lucullus. Brief reports give no detailed account of the course of his campaign. The proconsul left Roman territory above Aenus and had to follow one of the major land routes along the valleys of the Hebrus River to the northwest or the Tonzus River to the north. On his way he subjugated the Bessi after a battle near the mountains (allegedly the Haemus range (Balkan mountains)) and took their tribal center (oppidum) Uscudama. The next encounter was at Kabyle, an old Hellenistic foundation at the bend of the Tonzus, where the Roman commander once more prevailed. The record is conspicuously silent on the eventual reactions by the Odrysaе and the Astae to Roman operations in territories that had been so vigorously contested in previous centuries. They were probably content to see their rivals, the Bessi, subdued. Further details about the campaign against the western Pontic cities are meager. A decree from Mesambria dated to the winter of 72/71 BCE (IGBulg 1² 314a) honoring one of Lucullus’ officers mentions a Roman garrison quartered in the city. The text refers to direct negotiations between local authorities and the proconsul. In the face of imminent war by the end of 72 or the beginning of 71 BCE, the rest of the Greek colonies from Histria down to Mesambria transferred their allegiance to the Senate. Apollonia alone opposed Lucullus, but Mithridates’ fleet failed to render timely assistance and the city was devastated. Military operations were allegedly conducted as far north as the Danube delta. Subsequent arrangements left at least some cities, like Callatis, on favorable terms with

Rome as *civitates foederatae*. Beyond subduing Mithridates' allies, Lucullus' expedition was intended to assert Roman control in southern Thrace rather than to acquire additional territory beyond the older boundaries of Macedonia. Nothing is heard of a permanent Roman contingent *extra fines provinciae*.

The balance was once more shifted by the consolidation of the Getae under Burebista on both sides of the lower Danube at the end of the 60s BCE. With an eye on his expansion, the Senate instructed C. Antonius Hybrida, the next Macedonian governor, to launch a campaign in the northwestern Black Sea. In 61 BCE, perhaps following in the footsteps of Lucullus, Hybrida was able to regain the allegiance of the Greek colonies. A further advance against the barbarian people north of the Danube, however, proved to be disastrous. Near Histria the Roman troops were defeated by the Bastarnae, who were perhaps assisted by the Getae. The zone between the Danube and Haemus apparently fell into a short-lived political vacuum. Burebista promptly took advantage of the new situation to impose his sway over the Pontic cities from Olbia to Apollonia in 55 BCE. The epigraphic evidence suggests that some cities were able to escape larger extortions through negotiations (Dionysopolis) or open resistance (Mesambria). Until the death of the Getic ruler in the mid 40s BCE, his kingdom was Rome's real concern (Nawotka 1997, 47–55; Dimitrova 2007).

By the middle of the 70s BCE, Rome became gradually aware of the Danube as a frontier. Extended military operations on the west Pontic coast as far as the river's delta signaled that Rome was to assume a new role and greater responsibilities. New measures were needed to secure Roman interests in a distant region, where Macedonian provincial governors proved to be incapable of maintaining permanent control. But these were to wait for the next decades.

The incursions from the north that had troubled Macedonia for a century forced Roman authorities to search for alliances among princes and tribal chieftains along the provincial frontier. With Octavian's Illyrian wars in the late 30s and the campaigns of the Macedonian proconsul M. Crassus in 29/28 BCE, a new situation emerged on the middle and lower Danube. While Crassus' operations brought about the first serious Roman encounter with the tribes in that area, the political consequences are difficult to assess. The Roman proconsul first pushed back the Bastarnae, then fought and defeated the Moesi (the eponymous tribe of the later province) and later the Getae, but there are no indications of permanent territorial gains that extended the boundaries of Macedonia to the north. The zone between the lower Sava and Timacus rivers became more important to the security of Roman interests and control along the land route to Italy. Although no details of Crassus' local arrangements are reported, some kind of formal recognition of the most powerful tribes in northwestern Thrace seems plausible. An inscription from Claudius' reign for *praefectus civitatum Moesiae et Treballiae* (CIL V 1858

= ILS 1349) might suggest an earlier reorganization of the former tribal territories under Roman military personnel charged with administrative and judicial functions. Another suspected result was the reestablishment of Roman suzerainty over the west Pontic Greek cities, although specific evidence is lacking. Crassus intervened in internal strife south of Haemus and supported the Odrysae in stripping the renowned sanctuary of Dionysos from the Bessi.

The last decision was soon challenged. In 13 or 12 BCE a major uprising led by Vologaeses, priest of Dionysus, threatened to destroy the fragile security that the Romans had provided for the marionette regime of the recently created Thracian kingdom. King Rhoemetalkes' forces were defeated and fled to the Chersonese. Roman provincial territory was exposed to the rebels' attacks at a time when the Macedonian garrison had been drawn to fight in Illyricum; the difficult situation had to be resolved by the governor of Pamphylia, L. Piso, who led his troops against the Bessi and their allies. Over the course of a difficult, three-year war, he succeeded in subduing the uprising and restoring the status quo.

The Thracian “client” kingdom

In the search for fixed relationships with local authorities, Rome preferred to rely on centralized power. The Principate of Augustus revived an old form of the extinct Odrysian kingdom from the Classical period. Its arguable “client” status has raised some constitutional questions about the very relations between the princeps and the kings. In analyzing the broader context of these relations, modern scholarship has introduced the term “friendly kings” or “allied kings” (Braund 1984), which has been applied to the representatives of the last Thracian dynasty. The recognition of a “client” or “friendly” kingdom, however, did not entail any predetermined intention for future annexation by Rome: it was not a necessary, transitional step from “territory” to “province.”

In Thrace the prelude was long enough for the channels of friendly political relations between the most powerful Thracian dynastic houses – Odrysae, Sapaei, and Astae – to be generally perceptible, although lacking in details (Sullivan 1979; Tacheva 1995; IGBulg. 5, 77–79). By the mid first century BCE, the Roman government apparently took pains to build a more stable zone above the Aegean and Propontis based on “indirect” control, although there is no explicit evidence that it was a full-fledged concept and steadily applied. The result, however, was the gradual convergence of the dynastic houses of the Odrysae and the Astae. While this process had deeper political foundations in an earlier epoch, it was now supported by favorable external factors. The realm of the Astae, with their center Bizye in the southern foothills of the Strandzha mountains, was adjacent to the Roman provincial territory in Caenica. As in the case of the Sapaeian house in the neighborhood of Philippi, Roman officials had the opportunity to closely monitor the

situation and to create formal and informal ties between local elites and powerful Roman elites in Macedonia. The rise of the Odrysian-Astaeon house in the 50s BCE must have resulted from more pronounced Roman efforts to fill the vacuum after Hybrida's unsuccessful campaign north of Haemus and to respond to Burebista's pressure on the western Pontic coast.

These relations became more intensive during the last days of the Republic. The zone along the Thracian Aegean coast and Macedonia attained greater significance in the 40s BCE, first in the struggle between Pompey and Caesar, and then between the triumvirs and Brutus and Cassius. As a result, on the eve of the decisive battles at Pharsalus (48 BCE) and Philippi (42 BCE), Thracian dynasts were forced to play a "double game" and sent military support to both of the contesting Roman parties. Their allegiance rested on the concept of "patronage" and it continued to be an important issue in political relations in the early Principate. After Actium Augustus' concern to develop more involved relations with Roman friends and allies in the East drew his attention to Thrace. The institution of the "client" kingdom had to resolve persistent problems of internal instability in Thracian lands and to create a reliable political partner capable of coping with major external threats with only the slightest possible Roman involvement; it had to guarantee tangible benefits for Rome as well, such as providing manpower and income.

In accordance with Hellenistic tradition, the "client" kingdom was divided into districts or prefectures (*strategiai*) commanded by officers (*strategoi*) (Gerov 1970; Parissaki 2009), who were primarily Thracian elites, some thoroughly Hellenized, or loyal Greeks, who had been appointed by the royal court in Bizye. The epigraphic evidence suggests that the post of *strategos* entailed military and administrative duties. It is not clear whether a person held only one *strategia* at a time or if multiple, synchronous commands were permitted. It is more likely that there were a certain number of trusted and experienced men who were charged with several consecutive posts. In our sources there are no well defined *strategiai*, with respect either to numbers or territory, and the seats of the various *strategoi* are largely unknown. The inscriptions found along the coasts of the Propontis and the western Black Sea speak of commands "adjacent" to the Greek colonies, which implies that the cities remained autonomous. Nevertheless, the royal house in Hellenistic fashion kept close ties with these *poleis*: Thracian kings gave gifts to the cities, which were recognized by the award of eponymous magistracies by the cities of, for example, Callatis (Sherk 1991, 236 n. 41) and Athens (Thomas 2006). The actual seats of the districts on the coastline suitable for sheltering garrisons and administrative personnel were to be found at semi-urbanized strongholds like Anchialos and Tirizis (Kaliakra).

The "client" kings maintained military contingents trained and equipped in Roman fashion. During the Pannonian revolt (7–8 CE), Rhoemetalcus I (13 BCE–11 CE) moved swiftly from his realm to assist the Moesian legate and

offered decisive assistance against the rebels. Rhoemetalces and his brother Rhascuporis kept garrisons at Aegyssus and Troesmis to fight against the Bastarnae and the Getae beyond the Danube delta. Military assistance and cooperation with the Moesian troops became almost indispensable in periods of internal strife, mutiny, and discontent, as during the contested succession of Rhoemetalces I by his son Kotys and brother Rhascuporis or the two Thracian uprisings against Rhoemetalces II that took place near Philippopolis in 21 and 26 CE.

Some Hellenistic splendor is also recognizable in this network of dynastic relations. By the time of Augustus the royal court at Bizye was closely connected with king Polemo I of Pontus and the two families retained their ties and influence even after the end of the Thracian kingdom. Informal relations between Thracian royals and Roman citizens were forged in the religious sphere, as attested by the extant lists of initiates from the sanctuary at Samothrace (Dimitrova 2008, 115–119, no. 46). The last Thracian kings issued representative coinage. In some instances their own images accompanied those of the ruling Roman emperors – Rhoemetalces I with Augustus and Rhoemetalces III (37–44 CE) with Gaius – and perhaps expressed Roman patronage of “friendly” rulers (Youroukova 1976).

7.3 Moesia et Thracia Provinciae

Administration

Following constitutional arrangements made by the Augustan government, the two newly created provinces were to be formally assigned to the emperor. It is generally admitted that under Augustus and his Julio-Claudian successors, administration of the provinces remained dynamic and flexible, conveniently illustrated by the situation in the Balkans (Wilkes 1996). No explicit record has survived for the reorganization of the territories between the lower Danube and Haemus into an administrative district called Moesia. The terms “military command” or “prefecture” are often employed to describe a somewhat nebulous territory attached to Macedonia, north of the province along the right bank of the Danube. The date, circumstances, and reasons for the formation of the “Moesian province” (in a broad sense) remain controversial. The debate depends on scanty evidence and conjecture. Both Dio’s narrative for the last decade of the first century BCE and Livy’s *Periochae* are deficient, and the only contemporary witness of Tiberius’ Danubian campaigns, Velleius Paterculus, displays a lack of interest in such matters. Nor are there clear indications of the deployment of Macedonian provincial troops in their new quarters farther north. Recent evaluation of inscriptions from Callatis tends to support the older view that provincia Moesia was established ca. 15 CE (Avram 1998).

Dynastic strife in Thrace escalated with the murder of Rhoemetaces III in 44 CE, which caused further anxiety and brought Moesian forces once more into the country. By introducing provincial government in the place of the “client” kingdom, Claudius sought security and more efficient exploitation of the lands between the Danube and the Aegean. Whether as a single act or by successive steps in 45/46 CE, the joined command of Achaëa, Macedonia, and Moesia was suppressed. The latter was finally set apart under a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*. Thracia was run by an equestrian procurator whose inferior rank indicates the primarily administrative and financial functions of the office. Given the decreasing military importance of the territory, the Thracian governor was considered subordinate to the legate of Moesia (Gerov 1988, 33 n. 10). With the kingdom gone, the royal regiments should have been transformed into regular auxiliary units serving outside their homeland. Auxiliary replacements came from the adjacent provinces. For the entire first century, individual units are barely discernible in the vague report of Flavius Josephus (*Bell. Iud.* 2.368) that Thrace under Nero (66 CE) sheltered 2000 Roman soldiers. In the second and third century, two permanent military camps with auxiliary units are known within the province: Germaneia in the west and Kabyle in the east; there were probably more. Military diplomas and inscriptions suggest that from the very beginning the majority of the Thracian garrison was composed of mixed units (*cohortes equitatae*) capable of operating in both the plain and mountainous regions (Velkov 1989).

The decision to build permanent military bases in the frontier provinces resulted in the placement of up to four legions on the Moesian limes in the first century CE. Along with the original two legions – V Macedonica (at Oescus) and IV Scythica (location unknown; Ratiaria and Viminacium have been suggested) – internal struggles in Thrace brought leg. VIII Augusta into the camp of Novae in 44 CE; the subsequent Dacian campaigns of Domitian and Trajan saw other legions in Lower Moesia, among which the leg. XI Claudia was permanently installed at Durostorum. An almost equal number of auxiliaries were attached to the main forces; and so the forces between Viminacium (Kostolac) in the west to the Danube delta in the east were more than 20,000 in number. In this period Moesia was a long strip dotted by military camps, roads, and stations, built not only to secure provincial defense, but to break down the tribal structure of the local population. Domitian’s Dacian war (85/86 CE) encouraged the emperor to split Moesia in order to enhance its military potential without running the risk of concentrating too much power in the hands of a single governor (Ivanov 1997).

By 16–13 BCE the Thracian Chersonese was controlled by Augustus’ closest friend, Agrippa, who had been charged with extraordinary imperium in the East at that time. The former Attalid regal possessions, which had been transformed into public land (*ager publicus*), apparently constituted the bulk

of the private domain bequeathed to the emperor after Agrippa's death (12 BCE). Most of the Greek poleis on the peninsula south of the isthmus retained formal autonomy. Many inscribed monuments from there express loyalty to the emperor and his family (Kahrstedt 1954, 54ff; Krauss 1980; Loukopoulou 1989, 92–95). Inscriptions from the first century and the beginning of the second century CE speak of a regio Chersonesi that was administered by an imperial procurator. Other texts dated from Vespasian to Hadrian allude to both the emergence of Flaviopolis (later Municipium Aelium Coela, modern Kilia) as an imperial administrative center in the Chersonese and an overall urban revival, which resulted in improved tax-collection and resource management. The situation above the so called "Long wall" is less clear. The regio Caenica reported by Pliny (HN 4.11.47), who is dependent in this section of his work on Agrippa's map and contemporary Augustan documents, is more easily understood if it is interpreted either as a continuation of the district within the province of Macedonia or as an extra-territorial unit belonging to the imperial domain.

After the troublesome years concluding the Third Mithridatic War and the ensuing dominion of Burebista, the western Pontic cities from the Danube delta to the southern Haemus ridge – Istros, Tomis, Callatis, Dionysopolis, Odessus, and Mesambria – enjoyed a period of gradual recovery. Numismatic and epigraphic sources dated to the 40s BCE suggest an attempt by Odrysian rulers to control the coast. No explicit contemporary evidence for constitutional arrangements with Rome has survived, though there were earlier individual alliances. Crassus' campaigns in 29/28 BCE obviously helped Rome to regain her positions. With the establishment of the Thracian "client" kingdom and Moesia, the Augustan government turned to more direct control. By the beginning of the first century CE, these six poleis are reported to have been placed within a prefecture (*praefectura Ripae Thraciae*) under the authority of the Macedonian governor. The seat of the *praefectus* was at Tomis. Beyond broader military and administrative functions, the post exercised jurisdiction over Roman residents in the peregrine communities. That arrangement apparently lasted until 45/46 CE, when the whole zone was transferred to the enlarged Moesian province.

Rome brought no considerable changes to the inherited administrative structure of Thracia. The system of *strategiai* persisted until at least the first quarter of the second century CE. As already noted most *strategoi* were local aristocrats and highly cooperative persons whose career ambitions were quickly satisfied by the new authorities. In the first generation such careers, often accompanied by practical military service as well as the personal patronage of the Roman procurator, led to subsequent enfranchisement, so that by Flavian times most of these higher officers obtained Roman citizenship (Tacheva 2007). Their major responsibility was local affairs, especially military recruitment. The number of *strategiai* and their territorial distribution

within the province remain controversial. Pliny (HN 4.11.40) gives a total of 50, but his source is unclear. An often discussed inscription of Claudian date (46–54 CE) found near Topirus lists 33 strategoi who honored the Thracian procurator M. Vettius Marcellus; a contemporary monument also from Topirus was erected in honor of the Moesian legate T. Flavius Sabinus and apparently reiterated the same order of names, which indicates that an important event was celebrated (IThrAeg E84, E85). Nevertheless, the list of participants is secure and presumably corresponds to the exact number of strategiai at that time. In Ptolemy's description (Geog. 3.11.6) of Trajanic date, the whole territory of Thracia fits closely into 14 strategiai, so Pliny's figures are unacceptable for the time of Vespasian (69–79). The entire body of evidence suggests a gradual reduction in the number and perhaps size of the strategiai until they were finally superseded by the cities and their territories.

After the second Dacian war, probably by 107 CE, Trajan inaugurated large-scale administrative reforms in Thrace that would be completed by Hadrian. The provincial governor was promoted to praetorian rank and the system of local administration was gradually adjusted to accommodate newly created civic bodies. Waves of immigrants from Asia Minor further strengthened urban foundations.

Provincial assemblies (koina and concilia provinciae)

Provincial assemblies played an intermediary role between the cities and the central government. They were an instrument for direct appeal against provincial maladministration and expressed the self-consciousness of the cities and their loyalty to the emperor. The "assembly of the Thracians" (koinon ton Thraikon) functioned as a representative body of the inner provincial communities centered at Philippopolis (Burrell 2004, 236–245; Sharankov 2007), which held the honorary title metropolis. Presumably the title was granted under Domitian (88/89 CE) and commemorated by an unconventional bronze coin series with bilingual legends. Subsequently, the city rose as an inland focal point to rival Perinthus, where Claudius had placed the primary seat of the provincial government. The title itself does not necessarily imply the existence of a Thracian koinon, however, and the evidence to hand does not conclusively mark the project as Flavian. At present the earliest documents concerning the provincial assembly come from the theater of Philippopolis in the time of Trajan. These are statue-bases with honorific inscriptions (Sharankov 2005; Sharankov 2007) set up soon after the building was constructed in 116–117 CE. An obvious possible implication is that the building itself and the establishment of the assembly were closely connected; one may reflect further on the time of the koinon's establishment and the constitutional changes in Thrace undertaken by Trajan. It is noteworthy that both the project of urbanization in the interior and the

formation of the assembly in particular probably drew much inspiration from the neighboring province of Bithynia. The council (*koinoboulion*) points to one structural parallel with the organization of the Bithynian *koinon*. Otherwise, citizens of Nicaea and Nicomedia resident in Thracian towns are abundantly attested and the ethnic kinship of the Thraco-Bithynian countryside worked favorably as well. Like other organizations of this type in the Roman East, the Thracian *koinon* was essentially, but not solely, an institution of the imperial cult. The evidence for its high officials suggests further complexity and chronological development. A simpler structure can be inferred in the initial period where the extant data reveal the institution of the high provincial priest (*archiereus*). Perhaps a single representative figure at the top of the assembly, his narrower competence was in organizing festivals and religious ceremonies honoring the emperor. His exact relationship with the *koinoboulion* is unclear. By the time of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, urban wealth and civic rivalry encouraged more sumptuous expenditure that perhaps resulted in a more sophisticated organization of the *koinon*. Our inscriptions introduce another title – *thrakarches*. No surviving document explicitly differentiates between the *thrakarches* and *archiereus* as two designations for separate posts or two names for one official, entrusted at the same time with religious and administrative duties. Many of the known high-ranking officials were senior representatives of the urban elite. They are attested as rich landowners, especially in the fertile plain surrounding Philippopolis. Loyalty towards Rome, sometimes passed down through generations, was certainly a prerequisite, which is worth mentioning in the case of prominent Thracian aristocrats like C. Iulius Teres, who was a descendant of a royal family and served as *thracarches* around 161–180 CE (Pilhofer 2009, 240/L465).

An elaborate cycle of quadrennial events was connected with the imperial cult; the festivals of the Pythia, Alexandraia, and Kendriseia were celebrated with greater ostentation. Regular festivals were organized by the rest of the cities, including musical competitions, athletic games, and gladiatorial combat. They were an important factor in increasing both the number of public functionaries and expenditure on building special facilities, like stadia, theaters, and amphitheaters (Vagalinski 2009).

Lower Moesia presented a relatively uncommon case with more than one provincial assembly. The chronology and structure of the western Pontic League (*koinon*), an organization of the six poleis (Hexapolis) of Histria, Tomis, Callatis, Dionysopolis, Odessus, and Mesambria, is much debated (Mihailov 1979; Nawotka 1997, 216–233). Recent discussion tends to date its foundation in the time of Trajan or Hadrian, when it was closely associated with the imperial cult (Avram, Bărbulescu, and Ionescu 2004). Tomis kept its primary position as seat of administrative personnel. The presiding official is styled *pontarches*. With the administrative changes under Severus, Mesambria

was incorporated within Thracia and the league was altered into a Pentapolis.

The old Greek colonies on the western Black Sea coast and the Aegean experienced social and economic transformations as well. In the first and much of the second century CE, their formal autonomy was respected. Over the course of time, political and administrative reforms revoked their privileged status and made them subject to taxation, although incidental gestures of imperial generosity reconfirmed some older privileges. Since the coastal Greek cities enjoyed a certain immunity from recruiting, their territories were smaller than the new foundations in the interior.

Communications and infrastructure

Rome began to build a road system in the Balkans in the second half of the second century BCE with the emergence of the famous Via Egnatia from Dyrrhachium (Dures) to Thessalonica. With the extension of the eastern boundaries of Macedonia along the north Aegean coast, the road reached the Chersonese (Walbank 1983). For a century and a half it was the most important military and commercial thoroughfare from west to east. With the establishment of Moesia military and strategic concerns necessitated further road construction along the south bank of the Danube to provide logistical support for the legions. Simultaneously, in the territory south of Haemus new developments urged the “client” kings to promote an internal infrastructure sufficient to permit joint operations with their Roman allies. The land route through the Thracian plain and the Hebrus valley to the northwest apparently served Rhoemetaces I when he brought his troops to join the Moesian legate against the rebelling Pannonians (7–8 CE). Another important strategic route secured a connection through the Haemus passes between the legionary camp in Oescus and Philippopolis. Neronian inscriptions (61 CE) found at some sites along these last two roads give at least an early provincial dating for their final construction. For the next centuries the road running diagonally across Thrace (Via Militaris or Via Diagonalis) became the primary thoroughfare with paramount strategic, military, and commercial importance. Lengthy roads run parallel to both sides of Haemus. To the south as early as the reign of Hadrian (124 CE) the road from Augusta Traiana via Kabyle (an auxiliary camp) to Anchialus and Mesambria on the Black Sea was already under repair. An important route ran from the north through Tropaeum Traiani in Dobroudja via Marcianopolis where several branches to the west and south gave access to the interior. Its eastern extension led to Odessus on the coast. During the second and third century the main roads were furnished with stations for supply and control by representatives of the provincial governor (Madzharov 2009).

7.4 Cities: Urban Development and Civic Life

The archaeology of urban centers is clearly of major importance in our attempts to understand the processes of social transformation in Thrace. Unfortunately our knowledge varies dramatically from one place to another, in part due to the extent to which the cities themselves have been preserved, but also as a result of the different degrees to which the sites have been investigated archaeologically.

Roman involvement in the strife of the Hellenistic monarchies found the urbanized communities in Thrace in a harsh situation. The cities along the Aegean coast were victims of the Second and Third Macedonian Wars, being at that time a constantly disputed area between Macedon, the Seleucids, and the Attalid kingdom. With the establishment of Roman control over the principal coastal thoroughfares and the crossing from the Chersonese to Asia Minor at the end of the second century BCE, the Thracian hinterland was gradually cut off from the economic tissue of the eastern Mediterranean. Political instability had repercussions deep into the interior, where the major tribes attempted to take advantage by increasing pressure on the cities in the Propontis, on the southwestern Black Sea shore, and along the Hebrus and Tonzus river valleys. Archaeological evidence hints at overall decline and suggests individual transformations as well. Self-governing communities with an urban character were subject to constant extortions by local dynasts and it thus became increasingly difficult for them to sustain their autonomous character. Major military campaigns, like that of M. Lucullus in 72/71 BCE, also had grave consequences for particular areas. Comparison with the early Hellenistic period supports a general idea of urban decline both in numbers and capacity of the individual centers. While some cities were weakened, others dropped out of the historical record completely. The process was multidimensional and by the mid second century BCE it is clearly visible in the territory east and north of the lower Hebrus, which was long contested by the Romans and adjacent Thracians. Lysimacheia was destroyed, cities like Kypsela and Apros ceased to produce coins, and the same could be observed farther north.

Civic life resumed pace as the “client” kingdom grew and centralized efforts gave fresh impetus towards recovery. Outside the capital at Bizye, other urbanizing efforts are recognizable within the new administrative organization by strategiai. With the establishment of provincia Thracia the Roman government took pains to resume urban life at certain old sites and to promote urbanization on a wider scale. Initially, such changes were implemented as a result not of longstanding policy, but of ad hoc decisions, such as granting urban status to individual communities like Philippopolis. Strategically important sites were favored, especially those along the military road Via Diagonalis. A constant, deliberate concern to use the new cities as instruments of effective administration is visible as early as the reign of Trajan (98–117 CE) and was followed by members of the succeeding Antonine dynasty.

Urban growth stimulated further economic development in the region. By the last quarter of the second century CE, the process led to the establishment of smaller centers (emporia) focused on commerce, crafts, and agricultural products; those of exceptional local importance were strategically situated on main roads. Central authority played a significant role in organizing them as additional sources to meet the increasing logistical demands of the armies. The emporia were subject to control and administration by an adjacent city and municipal magistrates were charged with local government. Such emporia, largely known by inscriptions, are attested in the territories of: Augusta Traiana, where Discoduratae, founded by Marcus Aurelius, and Pizus, founded through synoikismos by Septimius Severus in 202 CE, were located; Nicopolis ad Istrum, where emporium Piritensium was established; and Pautalia (Gerov 1988, 119, 155–156).

The importance of Lower Moesia and Thracia in the system of imperial government grew throughout the Antonine and Severan period with economic consolidation rooted in the production, trade, crafts, and infrastructure of urban life. Major land routes served the traffic between the eastern and western provinces. In the time of Severus and continuing throughout the entire third century CE, the constant movement of troops and garrisons following internal struggles or foreign military campaigns made these territories a theater of decisive battles.

Coloniae and Romanization

Colonization in late Republican and early Imperial times is commonly understood as the establishment of new foundations of Roman citizens in Italy and the provinces. An organized installment of a compact group is technically described as deductio, referring to the establishment of discharged veterans and/or other Roman citizens. Caesar, followed by Antony and Octavian, started to plant colonies in the East not merely to serve as bases for military deployment, but to enhance the sources of Roman citizenship and to promote local economic activities (Gross and Torelli 2007, 411).

After the Civil Wars a cluster of colonies was created in Macedonia. The new centers drew population mostly from dispossessed Italian citizens and veterans from the legions. Within the new provincial order (45/46 CE), Claudius was the first to accommodate discharged veterans on an organized basis in Thrace in accordance with similar enterprises elsewhere in the Danubian zone, Dalmatia, and Pannonia. The emperor's choice of the older urbanized site Apros/Aproi, arguably an Odrysian foundation and subsequently a Hellenistic, polis-type community, located in the heart of the former administrative district (regio Caenica), was quite significant. To reinforce the acquisition of Thracia, still stripped of sufficient military contingents, Claudius responded with a colonial establishment (Colonia Claudia Aprestis) close to the convergence of the Via Egnatia and Via

Diagonalis. Its territory was large enough to reach the neck of the Chersonese to the south and the adjacent peregrine communities of Perinthus and Aenus. A civilian element was certainly at hand and the next generations saw a fellow-citizen on imperial service. This example is instructive on the matter of the formation of an urban elite closely connected with the colonies in the region; from Philippi in Macedonia through Parion to Alexandria Troas on the northwestern coast of Asia, a body of wealthy citizens strengthened their positions within a network of personal ties and administrative posts held at the higher, provincial level. Apros contributed significantly to the urban development of an area where for more than two centuries military occupations had caused a serious decline in urban life.

The second Roman colony in Thracia, Deultum (Colonia Flavia Pacis Deultensium), founded under Vespasian by veterans of the VIII Augusta legion, occupied a strategic position and helped to revive civic life and the economy around the modern Burgas bay on the Black Sea.

With the final constitution of provincia Moesia a new trend in settlement life began. Crafts and commerce flourished in small civilian sites (*vici* and *canabae*) near military camps. Enlarged communities of Roman citizens of different origin, both civilians and retired veterans, stimulated economic growth and created the beginnings of quasi-municipal administration. With Trajan's establishment of the first Roman *coloniae* on the lower Danube at Ratiaria and Oescus, the process of urbanization assumed an exemplary form. Smaller settlements developed their own administrative structure, though simpler and unsophisticated, and enjoyed certain autonomy from their respective camp.

At the same time the hinterland zone saw the emergence of large villa-estates that produced grain, wine, and fine ceramics and concentrated abundant raw materials to supply the centers along the Danube. With the imperial frontier farther north in Dacia, where part of the former Moesian garrison was relocated, the settlements on the right bank of the river experienced faster transformation in completing their civic character. Peregrine immigrants of eastern origin are attested to have taken up craft and trade enterprises, a clear sign of stability and integration within the empire-wide pattern. Intensive contacts with the East came through the harbors of Odessus and Tomis. The latter obtained special significance as a center of provincial administration. Tomis was also a sea outlet for Danubian trade and for transportation of troops, since it lay at the shortest distance from the river and military port at Axiopolis (Cherna voda). Odessus kept closer contacts with the Thracian interior through neighboring Marcianopolis and the vast rural hinterland to the west. A new wave of urban foundations came in the last quarter of the second century CE with the promotion of several *municipia* at Novae, Durostorum, Tropaeum Traiani, Troesmis, and Noviodunum. Their extensive territories, where large numbers of rural settlements have been documented, contributed

significantly to Romanization and to establishing close links between the rural economy and the cities. The Severan attachment of Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis to Lower Moesia resulted in greater economic stability and prosperity between the Danube and Haemus and gave more opportunities for merging the Greek- and Latin-speaking population. From the end of the second century until the 230s CE, civic life there was put on firmer ground (Gerov 1988; Suceveanu and Barnea 1991).

Through imperial expansion provincial cities emerged as a social frame wherein the most visible processes of cultural interaction took place. Current studies often prefer “acculturation” instead of “Romanization,” escaping the paradigm of a forced imposition of superior culture upon provincials. Defining individual cultures and their interaction, however, has proved to be equally onerous, if not impossible. New debates have introduced the term “imperial culture” as a phenomenon supplanting strictly differentiated notions like “indigenous” or “dominant” (Woolf 1997; Mellor 2008). Urbanization in Thracian lands offered ambitious peregrine elites (originally with presumably distinct ethnicity) opportunities to enhance their status and wealth and to fit closely to “Roman” standards. Literacy in Greek and Latin, the erection of public or funeral monuments, votive inscriptions, and the like help students and scholars of the region to define “Hellenization” or “Romanization.” Since lower-status provincials showed little interest in leaving written texts and were ineligible for public exposure, the level of their acculturation is more difficult to assess. Outside of an urban setting, Thracians from the rural hinterland are attested in the majority of cases as having been Romanized through the army. Their impact on the local population is more evident in the vici of Lower Moesia, where it is often hard to discern them from the rest of the Romanized element. A limited Romanizing effect is detectable in the villages of Thracia, even after the “Antonine” grant of citizenship was proclaimed in 212 CE.

Town-planning and architecture

The precise rhythm of public building in Moesia and Thracia varied in relation to the length of the tradition of urbanization in a particular area, the date at which the community was promoted to urban status, and the potential wealth of the territory, among other factors. The old Greek colonies on the Aegean and west Pontic coasts had a long history of urban settlement, while the cities in the interior rose widely as new foundations. While the former had completed their basic urban superstructure in the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods, the latter started to acquire their urban framework only at the end of the first and into the first half of the second century CE. Once urbanization took hold during the Antonine and Severan periods, building enterprises gradually moved on to the inland towns. In the second century expenditure was largely directed toward porticoes, temples, theaters, baths, and major

infrastructure projects like aqueducts. In analyzing the architectural embellishment of Thracian cities, a certain connection with the grand schools of Asia Minor – particularly with Aphrodisias in Caria – can be traced. The archaeological record points to peak development during the reign of Commodus and the Severan emperors.

The monumental layout of new edifices connected with imperial cult contributed dramatically to the change in urban organization. For the most part, however, it is scattered, fragmentary evidence, like preserved architectural details and inscriptions, that has survived, rather than full-scale monuments that could offer greater insight into a comprehensive building program. More uniform architectural expression of the imperial cult must be expected in the Roman *coloniae*, though the data are far from sufficient.

After the devastating incursion of the Costobocae in 170 CE, large-scale building programs focused on fortifying cities south of the lower Danube are recorded (Mihailov 1961; Biernacka-Lubańska 1982). With the initiative and financial support of the central government, supplemented by military engineering staff, quick and resounding building activities took place in almost every urban center. A common plan is detectable, for example, in the southwestern gate of Augusta Traiana and the north gate of Nicopolis ad Istrum. Local inscriptions give detailed accounts of elite involvement in sharing financial costs, sometimes covering the full expense for complete repairs or new building.

7.5 The Third-Century CE Crisis

A new phase begins by the late 230s CE for the Balkan possessions of the Roman empire. Large masses of barbarian people from the north arrived in the lower Danube region. The incursions of Goths, Carps, Vandals, and others through the lower Moesian sector of the *limes* in 238, 242–245, 248, and 250–251 CE had a devastating effect on the Thracian provinces. Military operations were concentrated south of the Danube and near the Haemus passes. Most cities saw their territories plundered; hard battles were fought near Marcianopolis, Nicopolis ad Istrum, Novae, and Augusta Traiana. Philippopolis suffered a disastrous siege by the Goths in 250 CE, when compromised defenses left the flourishing town open to the barbarians. Confusion and anxiety fell upon the Roman government, which was forced to order local commanders from the Moesian garrisons to answer the threat. Decius' ad hoc proclamation as emperor proved to be of no help since the battle at Abritus (251 CE) saw him the first Roman ruler to be killed in Thrace. The next waves of invasions in the 250s CE were even more massive, extending over the Balkan peninsula as far as Thessalonica. The enormous military effort of the emperor Claudius II, who was able to defeat the Goths and their allies at Naissus (269 CE), helped to prepare the ground for greater

military and economic stability in the region. Between 270 and 272 CE, Aurelian ordered the garrisons of Dacia, followed by the majority of the associated Romanized civilian population, to withdraw to the south bank of the Danube. The river became once more the settled frontier of the Roman world. With Aurelian's reforms both military forces and the civilian countryside behind the Danube were considerably strengthened.

Cities and their hinterland suffered grave losses during the crisis. With the reign of Gallienus (260–268 CE) civic coinage in the Thracian provinces finally ceased. The revival of the last quarter of the third century CE is more visible in the countryside, where larger estates were able to recover. Major villa-complexes engaged in grain production and metalworking flourished as a centralized system of supply emerged (Dinchev 1997).

7.6 Conclusion

Thrace was not uniform when it first came into contact with Rome. The three centuries of the Principate left tangible traces as the land conformed gradually to the Roman imperial system. The visible effects are mirrored by the monumental remains of the cities. This convergence did not result in uniformity, however. The division between the “rough north” and the “cultivated south” might have been a poetic invention of the Augustan times, but modalities imposed by the Roman administration brought lasting cultural divergences on both sides of the Haemus. With the massive barbarian invasions in the third century CE, ethnic distinctions became more pronounced as well. By the time of Aurelian the old Moesian tract reassumed its primary military importance at the threshold of the civilized world. The urban achievement of the Antonine and Severan periods yielded to preoccupations of military and strategic character. In Thracia provincia civic life reached a considerable stage of development; while there were islands of tribal pride and self-consciousness, the region entered into a new social and cultural order – that of the cities.

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Chapter 8

Thrace in Late Antiquity

Boyan Dumanov

8.1 Administrative Divisions

The late antique administrative reform of the Balkan provinces initiated by Diocletian was finalized in the mid-fourth century; the diocese of Thrace was founded as a direct consequence and was part of the prefecture per Orientem. The boundaries of the territory of the diocese were somewhat larger than those of the early imperial province and included areas immediately south of Istros down to the Danube delta, along with parts of the old province of Moesia. On the other hand, the extreme northwest of the Roman province of Thrace, including Serdica and Pautalia, was transferred to the diocese of Dacia. The western border of the Thracian diocese was fixed along the Utus (mod. Vit) River valley, crossed the Haemus (Balkan) Mountains near the headwaters of the Stryama River, and extended down the course of the Topolnitsa River towards the Succus pass. Its exact course between the upper and middle reaches of the Nestus River, where it also functioned as a border with the provinces of Dacia Ripensis and Macedonia Secunda, remains unknown. South, towards the Aegean, the border followed the lower reaches of the Nestus, including the frontier town of Via Egnatia Topeiros (Velkov 1977, 61). Within the diocese, there were six provinces (capitals in parentheses): Europa (Eudoxiopolis); Rhodope (Aenos); Haemimontus (Hadrianopolis); Moesia Inferior (Marcianopolis); Scythia Minor (Tomis); and the homonymous Thrace (Philippopolis). The chronology of the establishment of these administrative units and the boundaries between them is not yet completely secure (Velkov 1977, 62 n. 175).

The diocese of Dacia, which included western and northwestern sections of the earlier Roman province of Thrace, was grouped together with the dioceses of Macedonia and Pannonia in a separate praetorian prefecture of Illyricum (Bury 1923, 134), but its territory was divided and regrouped several times until 395, when it was attached to the Pars Orientalis (although claims on the part of the Western Empire continued until 437) under the name and status of praetorian prefecture of Eastern Illyricum. The northern provinces of Eastern Illyricum were Moesia Prima (capital: Viminacium), Dacia Ripensis (Ratiaria), Dacia Mediterranea (Serdica), Praevalitana (Scodra), Dardania (Scupi), Epirus Nova (Dyrrachium), Macedonia Secunda (Stobi), and, after 437, Pannonia (Sirmium).

Internal division of these dioceses complied with Antoninus Pius' reform of

152: provinces were subdivided according to city territories, with likely separate administration of farming areas remote from city centers (Gerov 1980, 101). Such a division of the provinces of the two dioceses reflected the desire of imperial officials to create a mosaic of military-free provinces interspersed with contiguous provinces hosting military units, in which the duces held higher authority than civic administrators (Cascio 2007, 180).

A new administrative unit was established in May of 536, the *quaestura exercitus*, which reassigned the provinces of Moesia Inferior and Scythia Minor from the diocese to the Cycladic Islands, Caria, and Cyprus. The new formation was led by a *quaestor exercitus* or “prefect of Scythia” based in Odessos. The reform was necessary for both military (Szádeczky-Kardoss 1985, 63; Curta 2002, 11; 2006, 46) and economic reasons (Velkov 1977, 62; Torbatov 1997, 80), with a perhaps decisive role played by the reduced agricultural capacity of the Balkan provinces and the need to import grain from eastern provinces, which emerged during the sixth century as major producers. This union facilitated the administration of grain supply and its transport by sea.

The civic and, to some extent, military administration of the Thracian diocese was delegated to *vices agentes praefectorum praetorio* or, in this case, *vicarius Thraciae*, with headquarters in Constantinople. The office experienced several transformations during this period, the most important of which dates to Anastasius’ reign, when the so-called “Long Wall *vicarii*,” who divided between themselves administrative and military authority, were created. For a brief time, 535–536, the office of *vicarius* was replaced by that of the *spectabilis praetor Iustinianus Thraciae* (Danov 1935, 389; Velkov 1977, 64). Judging by the 800 *solidae* designated as salary for this praetor in the *Novelles* of Justinian, his office was equal in importance to that of the praetors of Pisidia and Lycaonia, and the *comites* of Isauria (Ostrogorsky 1932, 302). In contrast with other dioceses, in Thrace the authority of the *vicarius* was not taken over by the *comites provinciarum* (Demandt 1998, 217). The diocese of Dacia was governed by a *praefectus praetorii Illyrici*, with no evidence of dynamic changes in administration of the diocese in Late Antiquity (Velkov 1959, 57 n. 3). The civic government of the provinces was entrusted to a *praeses* or *iudex* (Gk. *eparchos*) and the Thracian and Dacian governors usually held the rank *vir perfectissimus*, which made them third (or most junior) in rank compared to their colleagues – regents of proconsular provinces (Demandt 1998, 217). Yet, on the other hand, according to epigraphic evidence and information drawn from the *Notitia Dignitatum* and Hierocles concerning the provinces of Thrace, Europe, and Dacia *Ripensis*, there were also governors in the fourth century titled *consulares* and thus given the rank of *viri clarissimi* (Beshevliev 1952, n. 23; Demandt 1998, 218). Such devaluation of the importance of provincial administrators was universal and their responsibilities were limited to fiscal and administrative duties. In

the limes provinces their power was strongly contested by the duces, and their immediate assistants, the cohortales, had primarily military responsibilities (Demandt 1998, 312; Carrié 2007, 280).

Local assemblies (concilium; Gk. koinon) of ex-magistrates, representatives of decuriones, and executive authorities played an important role in provincial administration. Their decisions were observed uncontested by the prefects. According to edicts in the Theodosian Code, these assemblies were held regularly in the territories of the dioceses of Thrace and Dacia at least until the end of the first quarter of the fifth century (Velkov 1977, 71–72; Demandt 1998, 219).

8.2 Christianization and Construction of Churches

The introduction of Christianity as an official religion of the Roman Empire in 380 led to the demand for clerical administration in Thrace; this process was initially accommodated within the provincial division (Jones 1964, 873–937). An important source is Pseudo-Epiphanius' list, composed prior to the establishment of the theme organization, according to which the territory of the diocese of Thrace included five metropoleis, with twenty episcopates and fifteen autonomous archepiscopates. The most durable of these clerical units was the Thracian eparchy, coinciding with the territory of the province Thrace, with seat in Philippopolis. After the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the metropolitan bishop of the Thracian diocese was directly invested by the patriarch of Constantinople (Hall 2008, 731). There are some peculiarities, as in the eparchy of Europe, which has two metropolitan seats, one in Heraclea and another in Traianopolis.

The Haemimontus eparchy is even more interesting, with cathedra in Hadrianopolis (five episcopal sees) and a second metropolitan seat in Marcianopolis (also with five episcopal sees). The structure of the eparchy of Haemimontus recalls the administrative situation from the time of Trajan, when the province of Thrace included also the city territories of Marcianopolis and Nicopolis ad Istrum. Autocephalous archiepiscopates existed in frontier provinces such as Moesia and Scythia, namely in Odessos and Tomis, but also in provinces with established metropoleis. In Europa autocephalous archiepiscopates were located in: Bizye, Arcadiopolis, Eudoxiopolis, Apri, and Drizipara / Druzipara; and, in Rhodope, in Maronea, Maximianopolis, Anchialos, Cypsela, and Aenos. Two autocephalous episcopates were located in Thrace at Beroe and Nicopolis ad Nestum, and in Haemimontus there is an autocephalous archiepiscopate in Mesambria (Snegarov 1956, 651–653; Darrouzès 1981, 204–213). There is no single explanation for this phenomenon. The autocephalous archiepiscopates in the limes provinces were set up due to the special position of the latter, especially following their inclusion into the *questura exercitus*. In the interior provinces

their function was a consequence of dense population, as in the case of Europa, or communication difficulties, as in the heterogeneous landscape of the Rhodope Mountains.

Novella 11 of Justinian was issued in 535, which placed Eastern Illyricum, including both Dacia Mediterranea and Moesia Inferior, under the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Iustiniana Prima. The city was an entirely new foundation that honored the nearby birthplace of Justinian, but, more importantly, was meant to decrease the influence of the Archbishop of Thessalonica, who was the papal vicar for Eastern Illyricum. The emperor's ambition had little impact, however, and ten years later by Novella 131 (III) the Archbishop of Iustiniana Prima received the status of papal vicar and the church administration of the diocese of Dacia (Snively 2005, 216; Bavant and Ivanišević 2006, 69), losing his administrative and ecclesiastical prerogatives over the diocese of Macedonia Secunda.

Edict 28 of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 informs us that, similar to the metropolitans of the provinces of Pontus and Asia, the metropolitan of Thrace also had in his diocese bishops of the "barbarians" who were invested by the archbishop of Constantinople (Mathisen 1997, 669). The extent of the territory in the "barbaricum," which was entrusted to the Thracian metropolitan, remains unknown. This canon is associated with the edicts of the Council of Constantinople of 381, where it was clearly stated that "barbarian" bishops were not "urban" but "tribal" (Mathisen 1997, 668).

The onset of missionary activity in Thrace is traditionally associated with the apostle Paul, who "spread the Holy Books from Jerusalem to Illyria" (Schaff and McGiffert 1890, 176; Tsukhlev 1910, 11; Snegarov 1944, 371). Eusebius of Caesarea also notes that the apostle Andrew preached in the north of the west Pontic region (Schaff and McGiffert 1890, 175). Writings of the Church Fathers suggest that there were Early Christian communities in Philippopolis, Augusta Traiana, and Odessos (Tsukhlev 1910, 10; Snegarov 1944, 361–362, 609). During the second century episcopal centers were set up in Deultum and Anchialos, the bishops of which wrestled with the Montanists (Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.* 5.19.3; Schaff and McGiffert 1890, 368; Tabbernee 2007, 22–33). According to a fragment of Tertullian's *Adversus Iudaeos*, at the beginning of the third century, Christianity had spread among the Dacians, Getae, Sarmatians, and Scythians (*Adv. Jud.* 7.4; cf. *Col.* 3:11); thus, it is possible to imagine strong Christian communities at this time in cities like Odessos and Tomis (Minchev 1986, 31–42). The relatively wide distribution of Christianity in the Thracian and Dacian towns is attested also in the rich martyrology of *Menologium Basilii II*, *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, and *Chronicon Paschale*, among others, which detail the deeds of the saints chiefly from the time of the first Tetrarchy until the middle of the fourth century, including the 12 martyrs of Durostorum and the 38 martyrs of Philippopolis (Delehay 1902; 1912; Tsukhlev 1910, 13–15;

Snegarov 1944, 363; Musurillo 1972, 272–279; Pillinger 1988; for the prominent martyria of Naissus, see Zeiller 1918, 122).

Martyrological texts indicate the urban roots of Christianity in Thrace and Dacia and the prominence of the martyr cult in the cities (Iliev 2007, 35). In rural and isolated areas, however, the process was considerably slower. Paulinus of Nola and Jerome describe eloquently the conversion of the Bessi and the translation of the Bible into the Bessian language by Nicetas, Bishop of Remesiana (Tsukhlev 1910, 47, 48–49, 130; for the latest on Remesiana, see Jovanović 2013). This event, which marks an important step towards the conversion of mountainous regions, was still mentioned in late sixth-century sources (Lozovan and Haddad 1968, 237). On the other hand, Nicetas' role in the spread of Christianity should not be overstated, as it is quite likely that Paulinus' mention of "righteous men, seeking shelter in the caves" in fact referred to the growing popularity of hermits and monks in the second half of the fourth and early fifth centuries. Quite often the Bessi are mentioned precisely in relation to monasticism in the Holy Lands or Constantinople (Dimitrov 2013, 152–154).

Martyr cult was critical to the spread of early Christianity in its urban context. It is commonly accepted that martyria were created primarily in extramural or extraurban areas, which were the usual sites of martyrdom according to the Acts of the Martyrs. After the Synod of Carthage in 419, the gradual transfer of relics into intramural buildings began (Enchev 2006, 43, 45). The identification of sacred structures as martyria, however, is extremely unreliable, especially since many of those complexes have been destroyed. One of the earliest securely identified memorial structures is beneath the St. Sophia basilica in Serdica, within the boundaries of the city's eastern necropolis. The building that emerges here initially was a chapel or a martyrium, which later was enlarged to a single-nave cemetery basilica, decorated with floor mosaics (Shalganov 2002, 581–592; Boyadzhiev 2002, 164–166); the place soon attracted a concentration of Christian tombs (*depositio ad sanctos*). Similar structures and situations are attested elsewhere in Serdica (Stancheva 1964, 161–162; Boyadzhiev 2002, 162–163). An octagonal martyrium and another with six conchae are found as extramural complexes at Philippopolis, the latter associated with the martyrdom of the 38 Christians (Chaneva-Dechevska 1999, 255). Additional extramural martyria are known from: Augusta Traiana (Nikolov and Kalchev 1992, 29–44); Perushtitsa (the so-called "Red Church": Boyadzhiev 1998, 32–34); Voden, Yambol district; Markeli, near the town of Karnobat (Iliev 2007, 41–42, figs. 6–7); and Yagodin Mala near Naissus (Oršić-Slavetić 1933, 304, fig. 5; Milošević 2004, 124–128, figs. 3–4).

Intramural martyria are much less common. Such are found at Novae, within the earlier episcopal complex (Biernacki 2006, 62–64, fig. 4), and north of the episcopal complex in Zikideva, the stronghold on the Tsarevets hill in Veliko

Tarnovo (Chaneva-Dechevska 1999, 200–201, fig. 27). Larger buildings, with more monumental architecture and presumably related to martyr cult, are the church near Shkorpilovtsi, Varna district, and basilica no. 4 near Diocletianopolis, among others (Chaneva-Dechevska 1999, 180–182, 271–272, 300–301, 302–303, figs. 8, 78, 97, 99). Martyria architecture synthesizes eastern and western traditions, with a preponderance of Syrian elements (Doncheva 2006, 153–158). An impressive number of reliquaries, some with preserved relics, have been found in the territory of the dioceses of Thrace and Dacia (Buschhausen 1971; Bakalova 2000; Minchev 2003). The most remarkable is the find from the Djanavar-tepe church with monastery in Varna (Odessos), which includes three reliquaries, one in gold, another silver, and the third in marble, nested into one another. The gold reliquary is decorated with precious stones and probably contains a fragment of the Holy Cross (Buschhausen 1971, 264, C1, pl. 2, 3; Minchev 2003, 15–18, cat. nos. 1–3).

Church construction in the dioceses of Thrace and Dacia exhibits tendencies shared by all Balkan provinces, with attested regional and chronological specificities. Three-aisled basilicas with a single (often with pastophoria) or complex altar are common, as is the single-nave church, particularly in extraurban areas. Local types, developed in Late Antiquity, include cross-shaped churches, the tetraconch layout, and the rotunda. Vaulted and domed basilicas clustered in the provinces of Dacia Mediterranea and Thracia, while the rare, shortened-dome basilica is associated with the Balkan Mountain foothill areas of Moesia Inferior (Chaneva-Dechevska 1999, *passim*; Ćurčić 2010, *passim*).

The advance of church architecture in the eastern Balkan provinces is better traced in terms of chronology. The fourth-century churches, primarily single-nave ones, demonstrate direct continuity with the Roman public basilica. Among Christian basilicas, an elongated layout is predominant, which, towards the end of the century, was supplemented with extra rooms necessary for the increasingly complex liturgy; such architectural developments led in turn to the formation of Christian cult complexes.

The basilicas of the first half of the fifth century have shortened proportions and a wider middle aisle. The narthex receives lateral rooms, one of which functions as a diaconicon. Churches with a transept appear for the first time during this period, as do churches with cross-shaped plan and dome above the central space. The earliest monuments of this latter type are the churches near: Botevo, Vidin district (Dacia Ripensis); Ivanyane, Sofia district (Dacia Mediterranea); and Tsarkvishte, Zlatitsa municipality (on the Dacia Mediterranea/Thracia frontier) (Stanchev 1959, 70–75; Ivanova 1934, 224–299; Mutafchiev 1915b, 85–111). During the second third of the sixth century, a cross-in-square church was built in Iustiniana Prima (Bavant and Ivanišević 2006, 38 n. 20) and, over the course of the century, cross-in-square churches appear in the provinces of Dardania and Macedonia Secunda (Snively 2005,

In the late fifth and early sixth century, ecclesiastical architecture responded to transformations in liturgy, which led to the formation of the complex, tripartite altar, often diverse in layout and form. There was a propensity for centrality and larger-domed structures, which accommodated new liturgical and aesthetic requirements, as well as technical innovations and topographic conditions. A remarkable monument is the domed basilica of St. Sofia in Serdica (Filov 1913; the domed basilica near Rakitovo, Velingrad municipality, is similar: Changova and Shopova 1969, 181–212). This vaulted basilica with transept has a blind, drum-less dome and two four-story towers attached to the narthex. The space in front of the apse is extended and the altar is undifferentiated, which features have parallels in Asia Minor and Syria (Boyadzhiev 1967, 54; Chaneva-Dechevska 1999, 292), while the extended proportions of the church are reminiscent of older, Hellenistic traditions. Several earlier construction phases have been distinguished: the first is dated to the first half of the fourth century, while suggested dates of the final phase range from the fifth or sixth century (Filov 1913; Boyadzhiev 1967) to the eighth (Fingarova 2011).

Another direction in the evolution of the domed basilica is illustrated by the so-called Elenska basilica near Pirdop (at the Dacia Mediterranea / Thracia frontier) (Mutafchiev 1915a, 20–84). During its first construction phase, dated to the first half of the fifth century, it had the form of a Hellenistic basilica with a wooden roof and a simple altar. The second construction phase, with brickwork, transformed the church into a vaulted building. During the second third of the sixth century, the church acquired a domed baptistery and the altar was made tripartite. The second peculiar attribute of the Pirdop church is the presence of a defensive structure, an enclosure wall, which links it to traditions from Syria and Asia Minor.

During the sixth century, domed and vaulted basilicas do not become the dominant type in Thrace and Dacia. The principal church buildings continue to be single-aisle structures and three-aisle basilicas, either restored in the late fifth or sixth century or newly erected. These buildings preserve their wooden roof while implementing some architectural trends characteristic of the period, such as: arcades, which replace colonnades; trihedral or polygonal apses; and complex tripartite altars. Basilica A of the episcopal complex at Iustiniana Prima, dated to the second third of the sixth century, belongs to this tradition (Duval 1984, 407–409, fig. 3). By contrast, church types are more homogeneous during the sixth century in the diocese of Macedonia, where architecture manifests stronger Aegean influences: basilicas feature a single apse with semi-circular outline and a colonnade dividing the interior space (Snively 2005, 218). Iustiniana Prima occupies an intermediate position between the southwestern Balkan provinces and the Danubian territories. Alongside the conservative episcopal basilica discussed above, the city also

had an additional three three-aisle basilicas with simple altars, a double basilica, a cruciform church, a single-aisle church, and a triconch building (Duval 1984, 400–406, fig. 1; Bavant and Ivanišević 2006, 27–45).

There are few, heterogeneous examples of the transept basilica, which is another noteworthy variation on the Hellenistic type. The group includes the churches in Tropaeum Traiani (D), Marcianopolis, Diocletianopolis, and Pautalia (Olariu 2009, 165–168; Chaneva-Dechevska 1999, 183; Madzharov 1993, 134).

Church-building was an important aspect of the adoption of Christianity in Thrace and Dacia. Archaeological evidence suggests that construction began on the periphery of urban centers, instead of being regularly distributed over the territories. In rural areas churches appear at the end of the fourth and early fifth centuries; this is especially true of the mountainous areas of the provinces of Thracia, Haemimontus, and Rhodope, where pagan vestiges in the burial rites, bi-ritual necropoleis, and functioning sanctuaries survive until the mid-fifth century. According to data from cemeteries deep in the hinterland, Christianity spread much faster in the lower Danube; the process was facilitated by the influx of converted immigrants from the north in the middle to late fourth century (Dinchev 1998, 64–87). Such diverse Christian influences explain in part the diversity of church layouts and constructions in the dioceses of Thrace and the two Dacias. Beginning in the sixth century the number of Syrian immigrants to the western Pontic area increased, which prompted new forms, such as the church with monastery in the “Djanavar-tepe” locality near Odessos (Boyadzhiev 1995).

8.3 Urbanism and Non-Urban Structures

Urbanism in late antique Thrace is insufficiently or problematically represented in the written sources. This information deficit is especially acute for transformative periods, such as, for example: the late fourth century, when, as a result of Gothic penetration into the region after 376, the imperial administration was forced to use the settlement system to solve numerous problems; or the mid-fifth century, when, according to extant written and numismatic sources, urban life in Thrace and Dacia was almost defunct following the Hun attacks (Priscus, fr. 5; Marcellinus Comes, ad anno 447; Velkov 1977; Croke 2001); or the first decades of the sixth century, when the available sources, however scanty, contrast with Procopius’ sequential description of Justinian’s construction and restoration projects in 554 (Aed. 4, which should be used with caution: cf. Velkov 1977, 8–19; Poulter 2007b, 5–9). Recent studies based primarily on archaeological and epigraphic evidence show that an ambitious program of urban renovation and transformation in the Balkan provinces actually began during Anastasius’ rule (Crow 2007).

Epigraphic and literary sources from the second half of the sixth century are

also diverse in terms of quality and scope, but reflect only occasionally on cities in Thrace and Dacia (Velkov 1977, 13–14). As a result, two research questions formulated in the 1950s still await satisfactory answers: first, what was the effect of the Migration period on the development of urban centers; and, second, what were the main directions in their economic life and development in the fourth through sixth centuries (Velkov 1959, 14–15). Nevertheless, contemporary studies continue to open up new areas of inquiry, such as: the significance and hierarchy of individual urban centers; their topographic development; changes in urban planning; the transformation of social and professional differentiation; and the relationship of these urban centers with their immediate and more remote hinterland (Dinchev 1999; Poulter 2007b; Milinković 2007; Kirilov 2007a). Such problems require an interdisciplinary approach, including archaeological investigation. A rare instance of archaeological excavation corroborating written sources is provided by Nicopolis ad Istrum, where research has established the destruction and abandonment of the old Roman town and subsequent shift of the administrative structures towards the so-called “southern annex.” The situation well fits the framework outlined in the 448 treaty with Attila, according to the writings of Priscus (Poulter 1995, 34–35).

Late antique towns are classified primarily according to their location and condition as known from written sources. For the eastern Balkan provinces, towns can be described as: old, associated with the Greek colonization or founded at the time of Romanization; new or “dynastic,” founded on the initiative of the emperor, which practice was especially prominent in the sixth century; or emerging as a result of economic transformations (Claude 1969, 203; Bavant 1984, 245). Alternatively, we can rely on the terminology used in contemporary writings, which refer to major cities as *poleis* and secondary settlements as *polichnion* or *polisma*, as well as other, non-urban sites (Dagron 1984b, 7). This classification is misleading, however, as often the terms applied to urban centers by late antique authors are inadequate and employ antiquated terms or discount the importance of newly founded towns. Late antique towns in the region can also be classified according to their economic and geographic setting; four categories have been distinguished: Danubian towns, gradually declining; provincial capitals, benefiting from state support; towns of the interior, which lose their economic importance; and west Pontic centers, which take novel courses in their development (Poulter 2007b, 15–22).

Archaeological data can furnish an objective criterion for establishing the relative hierarchical position of a settlement and change or preservation of city status. The political situation of Late Antiquity dictated that city walls be maintained or renewed. Even in the absence of planned archaeological excavations, fortification walls are traditionally the most visible aspect of a city’s architecture and their monumentality could serve as a measure of the

town's significance. The size of the area enclosed by walls can indicate population size, as well as the city's administrative, military, and economic position; some scholars have attempted to estimate garrison size for certain "fortresses" on the basis of the size of the defended area (Curta 2001, 202–203, tab. 7). The presence of churches and public buildings, the maintenance of urban infrastructure, and the size of associated suburban areas shed additional light upon this matter. In the majority of cases, however, the size of the defended area is the only visible criterion for characterizing the towns of Thrace and Dacia. It is not coincidental that provincial capitals, such as Philippopolis and Marcianopolis, have the largest fortified areas. Thus, cities with a fortified area exceeding 40 ha. are considered "large" and "important"; towns with a fortified area greater than 20 ha. are the most numerous and thus "average"; "small" towns have a fortified area of up to 5 ha. (Bavant 1984, 283 n. 13; Dinchev 1999). This method makes the most complete use of available archaeological data, but can only be applied to the towns of the late third to mid-fifth century. Following the Gothic migrations and especially the Hun invasions, many cities in Thracia and Dacia were abandoned, occupation moved away from earlier locations, and the overall inhabited territory was reduced. This process is stratigraphically attested at Oescus (Kabakchieva 1993, 92), Nicopolis ad Istrum, Marcianopolis (Angelov 2002, 113–118), and Ratiaria (Dinchev 1999, 60). This reduction and transformation of the urban landscape was formalized during the restorations of the late fifth century and in the era of Justinian.

The period also witnessed the emergence of so-called "new" cities with intramural areas significantly reduced in size in comparison with cities of the fourth to first half of the fifth century. A classic example is Iustiniana Prima, founded in 535, with a fortified area of less than 10 ha. The town was conceived as an archepiscopal center of the prefecture Illyricum and, at a certain point, as a seat of civic authority. Despite the small defended area, the settlement was indisputably important and enhanced by the presence of exemplary buildings, including the archepiscopal complex with the largest basilica in the Balkans. Other residential, commercial, and industrial structures, as well as church buildings, were found in unfortified suburban quarters, which increased considerably the total area of the settlement (Bavant and Ivanišević 2006).

An illustrative example of sixth-century trends in urbanism is the settlement center on the Tsarevets hill in the modern town of Veliko Tarnovo. The fortified area covers almost 30 ha. on a rocky plateau, which, in contrast to Iustiniana Prima, was not densely built up. The site is considered to be the Zikideva chosen by the bishop of Nicopolis ad Istrum as his new seat due to security concerns at the almost abandoned Nicopolis ad Istrum (Proc., De Aed. 6, 11). Zikideva, however, was a major center and this bishop administered the largest eparchy in the province of Moesia Inferior (Dinchev

1997). Marcianopolis, the largest town in Moesia Inferior, lost its episcopal seat too, when the bishop, who was also a provincial metropolitan, moved it to the better protected and economically more attractive Durostorum, as a consequence of the misfortunes of the sixth century (Darrouzès 1981, 213).

Such reductions of fortified area and relocations of residential areas were outcomes of economic problems faced by cities since the late third century; these settlements had no potential to man extended defense lines and gradually lost their capacity to maintain them (Velkov 1977). Consequently, there was a gradual reduction of the defended area combined with the maintenance of unwallled residential areas. In Thracia and Dacia, Nicopolis ad Istrum/Zikideva and possibly Pautalia offer examples of both sustained occupation within the limits of the ancient town and relocation of the elite and administration to a newly built, well-fortified enclave, which, in the sixth century and the early Middle Ages, developed into an actual town (Kirilov 2007a). Due to their limited scope, archaeological investigations offer only a partial picture of such urban transformation. When central squares of forum or agora type have been excavated, as in Oescus (Ivanov and Ivanov 1998), Nicopolis ad Istrum (Ivanov and Ivanov 1994), Philippopolis (Mateev 1993), and Serdica (Bobchev 1989, 37–58), official buildings appear to have been abandoned after the late fourth century and to have lost their place as a focal point of urban life.

Novae is a possible exception, however, where the construction of representative buildings around the forum continued after the end of the fourth century and can be associated with a new, Christian urban elite. A three-aisle basilica was built atop a bath complex that had been burned ca. 376–382, west of the Principia and respecting the western boundary of the Forum. The basilica subsequently received a baptistery and, later, a martyrrium. In the third quarter of the sixth century, an episcopal residence was added to the church (Biernacki 1990, 187–208; Biernacki 2006, 59, 62). The existence of the episcopal complex from the first quarter of the fifth to the end of the sixth century is a good example of continuous use and development of new, Christian buildings that replaced or interacted with traditional public spaces. Comparable complexes are known from sites in Italy, Gallia, and Spain (Wataghin 2003, 230; Gurt i Esparraguera and Sánchez Ramos 2011, 282–283); a civic basilica near the forum in Remesiana (Dacia Mediterranea) was transformed into a church before the fifth century and was likely also part of an episcopal complex (Shpehar 2011, 259). Novae, it should be noted, survived the Hun attacks and the political cataclysms of the second half of the fifth century; its location was highly valued by Attila, who saw the town as marking the contested eastern Roman border on the Danube. Theoderic the Great chose Novae to be the center of territories controlled by the eastern Goths (Prostko-Prostyński 2008a, 133–140; Prostko-Prostyński 2008b, 141–158), perhaps because the city offered the shortest path through the Danube

plains to the Haemus passes into Thrace. Despite the river's width and the strength of its current at this point, Novae remained a preferred transport center, which secured its survival in the middle to second half of the fifth century and redirected traditional routes in the Balkan provinces; established hubs with developed infrastructure, like Oescus, had no urban functions at this time.

Episcopal complexes and churches displaced the forum and associated public buildings as the center of urban life in towns of "new type" founded in the early to mid-sixth century. Their topography was fundamentally different from that of the traditional centers and was oriented around a high, dominating point with radial-concentric street network. As a rule the episcopal residence and church occupied this impressive, defensible position and the surrounding area became the new focus of urban life. At Iustiniana Prima the episcopal complex defined an "acropolis," so to speak, next to which there was a round plaza with rich architectural decoration that should also have functioned as a forum. In fact, though, it served as an area that led to the fortified ecclesiastical complex (Duval 1984, 406–425, fig. 1). At Zikideva the episcopal residence with church was located immediately below the crest of the hill, occupying the most convenient construction spot and providing for a small square overlooked by the residence (Dinchev 1997, figs. 4, 8, 9, 10; for a comparable complex at Gradina in Moesia Superior, see Milinković 2010, 92–98).

Episcopal complexes in Thrace and throughout the Empire reflect an important trend toward the transformation of urban public landmarks. This phenomenon can be associated with the rise of new urban elites, starting in the late fourth century and continuing through the early sixth. In the final century of Late Antiquity, literary sources emphasize the role of the bishop as a person capable of opposing the emperor's authority when it threatened the interests of his parishioners. Archaeological evidence from the episcopal complex at Novae correlates well with the testimony of Theophylact Simocatta about the commander Peter, brother of Emperor Maurice, who was kept in town for two days by a local bishop because of religious holidays in 594. Peter's conflict with the bishop of neighboring Asemus, where the commander was prevented from recruiting a local militia, is an even better indication of the strength of regional bishops (Velkov 1977, 101–102; Salamon 2008, 188–189).

The replacement of traditional urban elites is reflected in residential architecture. Beginning in the early fourth century, imposing and opulent residences, which cover a large area and often with a second story, appear in both provincial capitals and less important centers. While elite residential architecture is well known in Thrace in the first to third centuries, it is clear that elites preferred to build private residences instead of buildings for public benefit in Late Antiquity. For example, in the middle of the third century the

so-called Domus Eirene was built in Philippopolis in a quarter emerging around the Great Basilica; during the first half of the fifth century, the route of the second cardo, east of the forum, was altered to grant access to this exemplary domus. Other rich private residences have been studied in Stara Zagora (Augusta Traiana-Beroe), Devnya (Marcianopolis), Novae, Ratiaria, and Abritus (Velkov 1985, 886–889; Kuzmanov 2000, 37, 42; Radoslavova and Dzanev 2003, 131–133; Dyczek 2008, 44–55; Valeva 2011). Common features include an official apsidal hall, meant for receptions and audiences, a peristyle courtyard, and rich architectural decoration, all of which suggest that local elites aspired to a greater sense of ceremony in residential architecture.

Most complexes of this sort are dated to the reign of Constantine (Polci 2000, 129–158) and may reflect broader social changes. In the first decades of the fourth century, prominent curial functions, including tax collection and control over town councils, were transferred to *principales*. The reforms continued throughout Late Antiquity and led to the total demise of the town council and the appearance of a new elite, consisting of the clergy, chiefly local bishops, senior military officials, and rich landlords, who undertook government responsibilities (Velkov 1977, 77–84; Whittow 1990). Such residential complexes, like the episcopal centers occupying notable areas in newly established sixth-century towns, are the archaeological expression of this important social transformation.

The late antique towns of Thrace and Dacia inherited a well-developed agricultural system designed entirely in Roman fashion and were inseparable from their rural surroundings. Written sources leave the impression of an urban center associated with a developed network of open settlements without urban status, characterized as *vici* (sg. *vicus*; Gk. *kome*), which is an umbrella name for villages with entirely agricultural economy and civic settlements associated with military camps, markets, and rural administrative centers. Many urban centers administered agricultural activity in the *vici* and urban elites were often landlords with incomes entirely dependent upon grain.

Discussion of the nature and appearance of *vici* is based upon literary sources and inscriptions; archaeology has contributed only very fragmentary results (for a typology of *vici* based on the presence and size of associated open areas, see Dinchev 2006, 253–254). Late antique, unfortified *vici* are usually found in inviting landscapes, near a source of fresh water and fertile soil. These features are inherited from earlier periods and remain valid until the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century. Available data, however fragmentary, indicate that traditional rural landscapes were modified chiefly as a result of political factors, such as the onset of the Great Migration and the Gothic migrations of the late fourth century.

The partially excavated *vici* draw a picture of a buoyant and organized agricultural system surviving until the end of the fourth century (for an important *vicus* in the hinterland of the late antique “Chatalka” villa, Stara

Zagora district, see Nikolov 1984, 52–53). The British regional survey projects in the hinterland of Nicopolis ad Istrum have revealed a network of *vici* that filled in all accessible arable lands, with strong preference for alluvial soils (Poulter 2007c). The major current research question in settlement studies of Thracia and Dacia is the sixth-century transition from open to fortified settlements, especially given that the latter have almost no detectable antecedents, with the exception of the post-villa *vici*.

Until the 1980s, fortified settlements in the eastern Balkans tended to be dismissed as fortresses; while not denying the presence of a civilian population, such an interpretation emphasizes their military function. Some scholars, drawing on Procopius, have even imagined defense networks that replicated the malfunctioning Danube *limes* (Ovcharov 1982, 19–20; Curta 2001, 154). Fortified settlements can be classified according to the size of their walled area; those exceeding 1 ha. are described as “semi-urban settlements,” while those below this bar are “fortified villages” (Dagron 1984b, 7–8). While “semi-urban settlements” appear at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, the developmental peak of “fortified villages” takes place at the end of the fifth and first half of the sixth century. These settlements transformed sites that originally had different functions as military or production centers. Distinctive of the sixth century, however, was the establishment of entirely new complexes. Fortified settlements tend to occur on elevated, defensible sites that offer visual control over the immediate area and enable communication with other peak sites in the region. Thus, the military purpose of fortified villages was limited to local defense. Although archaeological study of such complexes is difficult, diverse building techniques, sensitive to the local terrain, were employed and suggest government involvement, including specialists with engineering training like the *Victorionos* made famous by Procopius (Feissel 1988).

In the northern provinces of Thrace and Dacia, such complexes, differing in scale, are evenly spread throughout the territory. In the plains south of Haemus, where there were functioning post-villa *vici* and urban centers had not lost their significance, fortified settlements were of considerable size, in excess of 1 ha. In the southern foothills of Haemus and Sredna Gora, however, most of these structures should be classified as “fortified villages” (Dinchev 2007, 482–516, fig. 1) or, more accurately in terms of the landscape, as “hilltop settlements” (Kirilov 2007b; Milinković 2007, 166–179). The internal structure of those settlements mostly follows the model of the new, sixth-century urban centers, with buildings tailored to the terrain; churches and their auxiliary complexes are dominant and often the only intramural structures employing mortar, not clay bonding (Golemanovo and Sadovsko kale, near the village of Sadovets, Pleven district, are representative sites: see Ovcharov 1982, 27; Uenze 1992).

Late Antiquity in the eastern Balkans was a period of social and economic

transformation. A key development was the centralization of the economy, with the majority of towns becoming less economically effective in deference to the large provincial centers. The dominance of the agricultural economy came to an end after the Huns' raids in the middle of the fifth century: villa holdings disappeared. As a result, cattle breeding and metallurgy became more important, not attested in written sources but evidenced through archaeological research. State subsidies were directed to fortification and church building. As a result of both the Great Migration and home policy, the dioceses of Thrace and Dacia prove to have been economically and culturally heterogeneous. Territories south of Haemus and especially in the Rhodopes, however, represent cultural and probably also ethnic continuity leading into the Bulgarian Middle Ages.

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Part III
Evidence

Chapter 9

Settlements

Hristo Popov

9.1 Sources and State of Research

The archaeological study of settlements and the studies of the settlement system of ancient Thrace are almost a century old. Following the initial steps of describing, registering, and compiling a database of the sources undertaken by the pioneers of Bulgarian archaeology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the study of Thracian antiquity gradually evolved into several directions during the 1920s and 1930s. The data from the numerous registered sites was reviewed in the first systematic surveys (Velkov 1950), while the excavations of sites like Philippopolis (Plovdiv) and Seuthopolis outlined a range of scholarly problems associated with central settlements and processes of urbanization in ancient Thrace (Dimitrov 1958; 1960).

The years from the early 1970s until the early 1990s were particularly prolific: excavations on dozens of new settlement sites commenced in this period and sites like Kabyle, Sboryanovo, Pernik, Pistiros, Shumen, Vishegrad, and Vinitsa were introduced into scholarly discussion. Many became reference points for Thracian settlement archaeology and their investigation is ongoing. There was also a considerable advance toward the systematization of the available evidence for the form and structure of the first millennium BCE settlement system (Chichikova 1972, 327–333; Velkov 1976, 55–70; Chichikova 1985, 85–92). Several contributions successfully correlate the amassed archaeological data with the numerous Thracian linguistic survivals preserved in the ancient sources, associated with the various forms of settlement structure in the eastern and central Balkans (Fol 1970, 162–173; 1975, 38–39; Popov 2002, 46–48, cf. the detailed review in [Chapter 26](#) below).

The years since the mid-1990s have also influenced research on the Thracian settlement system. The discovery of new sites, such as Koprivlen and Halka Bunar, together with the advance of the Pistiros and Sboryanovo projects, have considerably improved our understanding of the functional differences between the principal components of the settlement system. New types of sites appeared (e.g., Kozi Gramadi, Sinemorets, and Knyazhevo), which reveal forms of habitation whose existence was previously hypothesized on the basis of ancient literary sources and limited archaeological data. The overviews, especially of the processes of centralization and urbanization of the Thracian settlement system during the Classical and Hellenistic periods,

also entered into a new phase (Domaradski and Taneva 1998; Popov 2002; Stoyanov 2006).

Today Thracian settlement archaeology has a rich resource base of hundreds of known sites of various types. The scope of scientific inquiries is very broad. Despite the still considerable evidentiary gaps, due to the underrepresentation of certain principal settlement types and the low degree of survey in some of the major historical-geographical regions, our understanding of the settlement history of Thrace during the first millennium BCE is continually, if gradually, becoming fuller.

9.2 Demographic Potential and Social Structure

Inquiries into the nature of Iron Age settlement life in Thrace are closely intertwined with the demographic potential and social structure of Thracian society in this period. According to the general consensus, the principal elements of Thracian culture, as we know it within the historical and geographical boundaries during the second half of the second millennium BCE, became manifest during the first millennium BCE, when the social structure of early Thracian society assumed its form (Bonev 2003). Homer supplies the earliest evidence of Thracian tribes inhabiting the north Aegean coast, their rulers, and the aristocracy. Meanwhile, the dynamic migration processes of the Late Bronze Age that later affected the entire eastern Mediterranean acted also on the eastern Balkan Peninsula. Later writings preserve traditions of dynamic shifts of individual tribes or entire tribal groups from the north to the south of the peninsula, and from the central and eastern Balkans to western and northwestern Anatolia (Fol 1970; Venedikov 1982; Delev 2014, and ancient sources cited). These migrations testify also to another fact with bearing on the habitation and settlement structures within the Thracian diaspora: evidently the central and eastern Balkan peninsula of the early first millennium BCE had great demographic potential. Hence the oft cited testimony of Herodotus, that the Thracians are the most numerous people in the world, after the Indians (Hdt. 5.3). Whether or not the conjectured demographic reconstruction, according to which the inhabitants of the east Balkans numbered ca. 1,000,000 (Fol 1970, 122–123), is deemed realistic or not, both early written sources and current archaeological research reveal equally that the peninsula was inhabited by numerous tribal communities that relocated frequently, a fact which is inevitably reflected in the settlement system and all of its components.

It is believed that as early as the late stages of the Bronze Age the processes of social differentiation and stratification within early Thracian society became increasingly more pronounced. The simple dual structure, with a clearly distinguishable small aristocratic class, is typical of Thrace during the first millennium BCE (Fol 1970, 137–173; 1975, 38). It also has a role in the

development of the principal forms and the general character of the settlement system.

9.3 Settlements and Settlement System in Thrace During the Early Iron Age, ca. 11th–6th c. BCE

The Thracian settlement system of the Early Iron Age (EIA) presents a number of problems regarding its principal forms, organization, and length of habitation. Over the course of several decades in Bulgarian archaeology the recognition and study of settlement sites of this period seem to have happened at a slower pace than that of the principal settlement sites from earlier prehistory or the Classical period. A more comprehensive and focused investigation of settlements from the late second to early first millennium BCE began as late as the 1960s and 1970s. The greatest density of registered EIA settlement sites known to date, in terms of quantity and degree of study, is found in the Upper Thrace Valley, the eastern Rhodope Mountains, and parts of contemporary northeastern Bulgaria. The sites along the Mesta and Struma River valleys, in western Thrace, and in large portions of the Danube valley west of the Yantra River appear rather isolated or are entirely absent.

Such statistics are somewhat skewed, however, due not only to scholarly priorities from the 1950s onward, but also to the expansive rescue excavations of the last two decades that have been prompted by the principal infrastructure projects located primarily south of the Stara Planina. Despite the disproportionate and unequal degree of investigation of EIA settlement sites, several regularities emerge.

As a rule, easily accessible flat or hilly areas along the banks of the major water sources accommodate small, “open-type” settlements with thin cultural deposits. It is very difficult to detect more than a single construction period or an accumulation of more considerable stratigraphy indicative of extended occupation. EIA settlements discovered in the Upper Thrace valley and in contemporary northeastern Bulgaria, like Pshenichevo (Chichikova 1972, 85–90) and Asenovets (Künchev 1984, 154; Gotsev 1994, 137), usually echo these observations, as do the numerous sites studied through rescue excavations on the territory of the mining/power plant complex “Maritsa-Iztok” along the Sazliyka River. The gradual accumulation of data, careful analysis of the available stratigraphy and materials, and their correlation with other sites in the region suggest that the apparent continuity of settlement is rather a coincidence of topography (Gotsev 1994, 137–138; Georgieva 2001, 83–84; Gotsev 2010, 72). The established variance in the density of the settlement network from the final stages of the Late Bronze Age and the following EIA is also indicative of transformations, which warn against uncritical adoption of the hypothesis of smooth continuity between the end of the second and the early first millennium BCE.

The vigorous rescue excavations occasioned by recent infrastructure projects have exposed new settlement sites in the eastern and southern Upper Thracian valley, similar in morphology to the sites discussed above. The sites near Rogozinovo (Stoyanov and Nikov 1997, 171–181), Malenovo (Bozhkova and Petrova 2010, 156–158), Karnobat (Bozhinova and Mihaïlov 2009, 80–105), and Zheleznik (Daskalov et al. 2010, 147–148), are characterized by thin deposits, relatively short habitation, and few structures with no vertical stratigraphy. Clusters of numerous small open-type settlements with thin cultural deposits and of obviously relatively short duration are registered in some of the western regions of Upper Thracian, along the Upper Maritsa and Stryama Rivers (Kisiov 2004, 69).

Observations on the internal organization of those thin-layered settlements are faced with the fact that the survey area (studied through destructive or non-destructive methods) for any given EIA settlement site is quite limited, hindering a more comprehensive picture. The surface area of this type of settlement site in most cases does not exceed a few decares. It is difficult to make any specific conclusions regarding their spatial extent or internal organization. An overview of the results obtained from different sites, however, makes possible the formulation of a working hypothesis that the settlements were rather of dispersed type, with no clustered built-up space, with relatively wide, open spaces between the buildings used either as backyards or occupied by auxiliary structures like garbage pits, general purpose buildings, and work platforms.

The accumulation of obvious regularities in terms of characteristic traits of the settlements from the flatlands, especially in the large rivers valley south of the Balkan Mountains (Tundzha and Maritsa), resulted in the formulation of a working hypothesis attempting to explain these regularities. It should be pointed out that the occurrence of dense clusters of EIA settlement sites in certain micro-regions does not necessarily make them contemporary. Given their short lives, it is possible to assert that a large portion of those were not coeval. Based on the short duration of occupation, which is inferred from the thin cultural deposits, the single-phase construction, and the small number of structures, it has been suggested that some of the agglomerations within one micro-region are in fact the same settlement, periodically shifting and repeatedly “recreating” itself (Borislov 1999, 20–21; Nikov 2000, 7). Analysis of the field data available to date suggests “semi-sedentism” and frequent relocation of settlements. The hypothesis is extended by proposing that this settlement “migration” was short-distance and restricted within the territories more permanently settled by the same population. Even if this model is accurate, it is still unclear whether relocation was due to specifics of the agrarian regime (extensive agriculture; rapid exhaustion of the soils; relocation?) or to other causes.

Consequently, the cult places toward which settlements gravitate are regarded

as the only somewhat stable reference points for the settlement system. The hypothesis is in agreement with the evidence that some of the later large urbanized centers emerged around cult places with a long history and interregional significance. Such conjectures are voiced with regard to the later towns of Philippopolis and Kabyle (Domaradski and Taneva 1998, 18; Popov 2002, 173). The EIA occupation of some prehistoric settlement mounds in the flatlands of the Upper Thrace valley or of the topographically dominant rock promontories of the region is also considered in this context by some authors. The insufficient level of survey and publication do not allow more concrete functional interpretations, though (Georgieva 2001, 84). Based on this hypothesis, the isolated examples of Plovdiv and the Razkopanitsa and Dyadovo tells may have been in fact flatland sanctuaries with conspicuous locations, rather than common settlements with a more defensible position (Gotsev 1994, 138; Gotsev 2010, 72).

On the other hand, a settlement model characterized by instability, frequent relocation, and the comparatively short life of individual settlement units should not be uncritically imposed onto the rest of ancient Thrace. The settlement database, considerably expanded by numerous recent surveys in the Eastern Rhodopes and, to a lesser extent, the Sakar Mountains and the area of central and northeastern Bulgaria, supports the conclusion that there was a pronounced regionalism in EIA Thrace that resulted in distinctive manifestations of non-secular and material culture and of the primary features of the settlement life.

Habitation on a number of naturally protected areas is demonstrably long-lasting. The settlement system of the mountainous and semi-mountainous regions obviously departs from the specifics of habitation of the open landscapes of the lowlands. Sites known through earlier or more recent excavations, like Vishegrad (Dremsizova-Nelchinova 1984), Kom peak (Georgieva 1982), and Kush Kaya (Popov 2009, 32–35), are illustrative of the model of fortified settlements located in semi-mountainous and mountainous regions. Characteristic of those agglomerations is longevity of habitation (often up to the late phases of the Iron Age), not only in terms of topography, but also in terms of uninterrupted continuity, with several construction phases resulting in cultural deposits often exceeding 1.5–2 m in depth. Although the site near Ovcharovo, Sakar Mountains, does not figure among the long-term occupations, it too indicates that naturally fortified settlements were a very common type of habitation (Balabanian 1986).

At present, the eastern Rhodopes provide some of the best opportunities to analyze the EIA settlement system. Review of the evidence indicates continuity and a well-pronounced vertical stratigraphy from the Late Bronze Age and EIA (Kisyov 1988; Kulov 1991, 74–75). The regional Late Bronze Age and EIA settlement topography demonstrates common geomorphologic forms, altitude, proximity to water sources, density, and principles of location.

Both periods share similar morphological traits in the individual components of the settlement structure and a tradition of long-term habitation (Popov 2009, 36). Close parallels for the topography are also provided by those sites deemed fortified settlements or generally interpreted as sanctuaries or cult places (Shalganova and Gotzev 1995, 335–336; 153–155; Popov 2009, 36; cf. [Chapter 10](#) with literature cited). Often the inadequate scale of excavation results in over-interpretation and a preference toward interpretations in terms of either “cult places” or “settlements and utilitarian occupation.” Recent excavations at Gluhite Kamani (Nekhrizov 2010, 188–189, fig. 1), Perperikon (Ovcharov, Dimitrov, and Leshtakov 2011, 24–35 with literature), and Dragoyna (Bozhinova, Jung, and Mommsen 2010, 46–49 with literature) illustrate the extent to which such functions may overlap. The three sites are very large, and have long been considered as chief members of the “sanctuary and cult places” category. Yet, alongside confirmation of their function as cult places, large-scale excavations have also produced many artifacts of utilitarian nature, which are associated with a more permanent occupation and expand the functional traits of these sites.

The considerable demographic potential and high occupation density of the eastern Rhodope, Sakar, and Strandzha Mountains is also supported by the numerous megalithic monuments in southeastern Thrace (see [Chapter 10](#); Delev 1982, 27–41) dated to this period. The ample preliminary statistical data for this part of southeastern Thrace makes possible the distinction of discrete clusters of a substantial number of EIA sites. It is possible to propose that these regions represent the territories of small tribal communities.

An explanation for the considerable demographic potential and permanent EIA occupation of discrete regions of southern and southeastern Thrace might not be restricted to the presence of naturally protected locations supplied by mountains and lower hills. For example, another possible stable indicator of more enduring habitation might be natural resources, in particular, some key deposits of ore in the Rhodope, Strandzha, and Sakar Mountains. The reason for the long-term occupation of settlement sites such as Ada Tepe and Branitsa (Shalganova and Gotsev 1995, 34; Popov and Nikov 2012) can be identified precisely in the permanent set-up and organization of the protection and exploitation of important natural resources, around which developed the everyday life and subsistence of local tribes. Some fortified settlement sites (possibly also with overseeing functions) on the Medni Rid ridge, along some of the richest copper deposits in contemporary Bulgarian territory, might also be fruitfully interpreted in this light. Fortified settlements such as Bakarlashko and Malkoto Kale feature substantial cultural deposits, several consecutive habitation phases, and an active human presence from the early stages of the EIA until Late Antiquity (Domaradski, Karaiotov, and Gotsev 1992, 29; Gyuzelev 2008, 106–110).

Northeastern Thrace supplies fewer registered and studied EIA settlements

(Gotsev 1992, 73). Yet even here there are examples of the two primary models of habitation discussed above. The settlement sites near Golyamo Delchevo, Sava, and Dalgopol are situated alongside the river terraces at the confluence of the Luda Kamchia and Golyama Kamchia Rivers. Once again the deposits are thin, found high in the topsoil (Todorova 1971, 17–18), and lack clear stratigraphy. The various interpretations put forward by different scholars for the internal division of the settlement system and differentiation of administrative, cult, and production centers lack sufficient support in the published data (Shalganova and Gotsev 1995, 335; Gotsev 1997, 415–416 with the cited literature).

For several decades now northeastern and central northern Thrace have delivered excellent examples of fortified settlements, with several consecutive phases of development and permanent, stable occupation. Located on dominating heights overlooking land and river corridors, like the settlements near the Shumen plateau and Tsarevets-Trapezitza, the sites are characterized by long, continuous habitation and preserve their place in the settlement system even into subsequent periods (Antonova and Popov 1984, 160–161, 182; Dolmova-Lukanovska 1984, 236–237).

The current state of research north and northeast of the Balkan Mountains indicates that, as in southern and southeastern Thrace, occupation density gradually increases over the course of the first millennium BCE; micro-regions rich in settlement structures form that later, during the second half of the first millennium BCE, underwent a considerable evolution against a backdrop of increased centralization and state-formation processes (Stoyanov 2000a, 55–56; Stoyanov, in press).

As pointed out above, in northwestern and western Thrace detailed information is available only for isolated settlements or is otherwise completely lacking. Such a lack of evidence was already recognized in earlier reviews of settlement life in Thrace (Gotsev 1997, 415) and, regrettably, the situation remains unchanged today.

The gradual accumulation of data from excavated EIA settlement sites, mostly from contemporary southeastern, southern, and northeastern Bulgaria, has allowed scholars to reach more detailed conclusions about the typical architecture of residential and auxiliary constructions of the period. Monumental buildings of durable materials and with representative functions are entirely missing from the EIA settlements excavated to date. Stone use is only attested in a few instances, to provide a more solid footing and plinth for the main construction. Overall, the studied buildings (residential and outbuildings) featured a less substantial wood-and-clay construction. The walls were made of poles, joined by wattle and plastered with clay. The constructions sat either on the ground or were slightly sunken, and their plans, where preserved, are either rectangular or square. Better preserved examples of EIA residential and auxiliary constructions from Thrace are known from

Pshenichevo, Asenovets, Shumen, Malka Vereya, Kasnakovo, Kush Kaya, Karnobat, and Zheleznik (Chichikova 1972, 85–87, fig. 7; Kǎnčev 1974, 69, fig. 7; Antonova and Popov 1984, 162–169, figs. 2–3; Kalchev 1994, 27–28, fig. 2; Katsarova 2008, 492, fig. 2; Popov 2009, fig. 15; Bozhinova and Mihaïlov 2009, 81–86, figs. 3–9; Daskalov et al. 2010, 147–148, figs. 1–2), among others.

To sum up, the following principal traits and consistencies in the development of the settlement system and its individual components from EIA ancient Thrace can be surmised. The settlement system of this period is rather decentralized and dispersed. Large areas were affected by migration processes, leading to semi-sedentism and unstable habitation for large groups of people, mostly in the flatlands, especially during the early stages of EIA. Nonetheless, the eastern Balkans emerges as a zone with substantial demographic potential and high intensity of occupation. More durable tendencies toward permanent habitation are found in some semi-mountainous and mountainous regions. Gradually, in some parts of the country, clearly distinguishable settlement clusters emerge, which can be identified as micro-regions inhabited by discrete tribes. At present, however, it is difficult to speak of a pronounced stratification and recognizable hierarchy of the settlement structure. Rather, differentiation is poor and distinctions between the individual settlement units are insignificant. The central settlements are difficult to recognize and likely exerted control over relatively small territories.

These typical features of the EIA Thracian settlement system can also be related to tendencies of the local population, which was distributed among numerous small communities, often mobile, and characterized by decentralization. The hierarchy of the settlement structure (if one may write of such a thing) is rather of a low order, with no discernible movement toward interregional centralization. The latter processes become more visible toward the end of the EIA.

9.4 Settlements and Settlement System in Thrace of the Late Iron Age, 5th–1st c. BCE

The evolution of the settlement system in Thrace during the Late Iron Age was strongly influenced by both active state formation processes and the Greek colonization of the Thracian coast. The slow but sure advent of numerous Greek colonies (*apoikiai*) along the north Aegean and west Pontic coasts between the eighth and the sixth centuries BCE led not only to the establishment of permanent zones of influence and the gradual emergence of a network of satellite settlements in the immediate hinterland of the colonies, but also to the establishment of stable exchange routes toward important regions in the interior (see [Chapters 19](#) and [27](#)). A number of settlements

developed in connection with these primary economic arteries. The penetration into the interior was facilitated along several principal routes. The economic potential contained in the road networks also caused the gradual formation and rise of agglomerations within the settlement hierarchy, which were directly associated with these routes and controlled them.

Of particular interest are the southwestern regions of ancient Thrace. Numerous small Thracian tribal communities are found in this region, with, on the one hand, a foot in the North Aegean with open access to the Mediterranean, and, on the other hand, immediately available corridors into the peninsula's interior along the Axios, Strymon, and Nestos Rivers (Bozhkova and Delev 2002, 88–90; Delev 2014; see [Chapters 2 and 3](#)). Their relatively high level of complexity is reflected not only in the early reports of the rise of the institution of kingship among some of those tribes, but also by the early Thracian tribal coinage, first attested precisely in this part of ancient Thrace. The explanations for the early (compared to the rest of the country) progress of the processes of noticeable political and economic sophistication might lie in the organized procurement of gold and silver in the numerous mines, located not only in Pangaion, but also the Chalkidiki peninsula and in the vicinity of modern Drama (Bozhkova and Delev 2002, 90; Delev 2014; see [Chapter 18](#)).

The onset in this part of Thrace of certain early consolidation and centralization processes in the settlement system could be associated with a political, economic, and cultural regionalism, demonstrated as early as the Archaic period. One of the key corridors starts in the North Aegean, the Thasian peraia, follows the Mesta River through the western Rhodope Mountains, and reaches the Upper Maritsa River (anc. Hebros) (Domaradski 1995, 37–39); it is associated with two of the large settlement centers of western Thrace – one near the modern village of Koprivlen in the Mesta (Nestos) River valley, the other at Adzhiyiska Vodenitsa, sometimes identified with Pistiros, located on the Upper Maritsa (Hebros) River, in the westernmost part of Upper Thrace.

The ancient settlement near Koprivlen, on the right bank of the Mesta, existed as early as the seventh century BCE. By the end of the sixth and throughout the fifth century, the site had already displayed early forms of monumental architecture that were surprisingly sophisticated given the building tradition of the date. The settlement is characterized by affluence, intensive trade, and an appearance clearly distinct from the traditional settlement and residential forms of Thrace (Bozhkova 2002, 84–89; Delev 2002, 91–101). Even the limited areas excavated confirm large-scale occupation and elements of internal organization. During the late Archaic period and into the second half of the first millennium BCE there gradually developed a network of satellite settlements in this part of the Nestos valley (Vulceva et al. 2000, 146–148).

Koprivlen is a good example of the potential longevity of settlements situated

along a corridor with long-term significance. Key to their growth were economic contacts, trade, and transportation along main interregional routes. As a trade center and transport hub with mediating and controlling functions Koprivlen finds its later parallel in Pistiros, situated on the left bank of Hebros River, near the modern town of Septemvri and the village of Vetren. The site is situated on the main route through the western Rhodopes mentioned above. We owe to this site a breakthrough in the study of the settlement system of Thrace achieved by its discoverer, M. Domaradski. Thanks to the results of extended archaeological excavation and the wealth of information provided by an inscription discovered in the vicinity of the site, we have at our disposal much richer evidence for the genesis, functions, and specialization of certain fundamental sites in Thrace and of the manner of organization and control over communications directly associated with them (Domaradski 1995; Bouzek et al. 2013, with all earlier publications cited; see more on Pistiros and the role of emporia in the urbanization process in [Chapter 26](#)).

The settlement emerged as a marketplace (emporion). According to the conclusions of its first excavator, the site was charged with the administration of the metal trade in this part of the Balkans. Several principal interregional roads meet in this open landscape. Metal trade, as well as the management of metal procurement and processing, held an important place in settlement processes in the Balkans. The early Greek penetration was not restricted to the coastal regions, but reached deep into the hinterland. This kind of “inland colonization” has an important role in the settlement development of Thrace, for scholars are forced to inquire into the circumstances that allowed such a settlement form, alien to the traditions of the region, to be established in the Thracian interior, far from the coast; to be integrated within and influence the local settlement network; and to create an organized infrastructure around itself. Of course, such an infiltration could not have taken place without the consent of the local authorities or, more specifically, the king, as is made clear in the Pistiros inscription, which appears to record a sworn contract fixing the dealings between the emporitai and one of the line of rulers of the Odrysian dynasty. Evidently both parties benefited from this relationship.

The Pistiros inscription illustrates well the role of centralized, early state formations that were already established and the intense development of the settlement structure and communications in Thrace after the middle of the first millennium BCE. The political events of the late sixth and fifth centuries BCE further influenced processes of consolidation and state-formation in some leading Thracian tribes. During the Greco-Persian wars and the subsequent prolonged conflict between Athens and Sparta of the second half of the fifth century BCE, tribes from the eastern and central Balkans become more regular, immediate participants in events. The formation of the early states of some of the large Thracian tribes, like the Odrysians, Getae, and Triballoi, reflects tendencies toward centralization and hierarchy in the settlement

system. Within the boundaries of the new states of inland Thrace there appear increasing numbers of settlements with central administrative functions. The seats of rulers or local dynasts gradually grew and assumed leading positions in the settlement system. The territories organized in these early state formations are considerably larger than the old local tribal territories. In line with these changes, the settlement system begins to display a new face and organization.

During the fifth–fourth centuries BCE along the Hebros and Tonzos River valleys and on the low slopes of the adjacent mountains, many settlements with central functions emerged. In contrast with the EIA, there are now visible centers with impressive architecture, good fortification, and, as suggested by the numerous imported luxury objects arriving through far-reaching trade networks, the inhabitants had a high standard of living. The great density of settlements with central functions in the Upper Thrace plain and in the southern and northern periphery of Sredna Gora corresponds with and embodies the rise and development of a strong Odrysian state (Fol 1975; Archibald 1998; cf. [Chapter 4](#)). Worthy of mention are the settlements near Vasil Levski (Kisyov 2004, 51–73; Popov 2002, 73–76), Philippopolis (Domaradski and Taneva 1998, 22–29; Popov 2000, 124–130), Kabyle (Velkov 1991, 143–152; Domaradski 1990, 50–60; Khandzhińska and Lozanov 2010, with all literature cited), and the newly discovered settlement near Krastevich (Madzharov et al. 2007, 161–164), which, alongside Pistiros and Koprivlen, are prominent settlements established before the Macedonian expansion.

In the second half of the fourth century BCE, following the successful campaigns of Philip II and Alexander III, the Macedonian state took over vast Thracian territories (see [Chapters 5](#) and [6](#)). This is reflected also in the appearance of some of the large settlements, which were transformed into centers of Macedonian power. The fortifications of Kabyle, Philippopolis, and Pistiros underwent considerable modification (Domaradski 1982; Domaradski 1995; Nankov 2008; [Chapter 26](#)). This historical process is associated with the development of another settlement pattern in Thrace. The settlement of Macedonian colonists, transformation of some central towns into centers of administration, and foreign military presence leads to the alleged polis-like outlook that some Thracian cities acquired (see [Chapter 26](#)). This model of society, however, is foreign to Thrace and is rather unnaturally imposed. It should be noted that Kabyle (Draganov 1993) and, in a very late stage of the Hellenistic period, Philippopolis are the only cities in inland Thrace that minted their own coinage.

While the model of a settlement as seat of the local ruler and possessing primarily administrative functions remains standard for Thrace, such sites now conform to novel trends typical of the Hellenistic period. Perhaps the most oft quoted example of a royal residential town in Thrace is Seuthopolis,

named after its founder, the Odrysian ruler Seuthes III. The town was built *ex novo* at the end of the fourth century BCE on the Upper Tonzos River (west of the town of Kazanlak), in line with a popular, early Hellenistic fashion for founding new settlements (Dimitrov 1960, 3–12; Dimitrov and Čičikova 1978; Chichikova 1985, 87–88; Domaradski and Taneva 1998, 39–43; Popov 2002, 122–134; Nankov 2008, 15–50; see also the discussion in [Chapter 26](#)). Despite its monumentality, Seuthopolis is rather an exception in the settlement system of Thrace. As an example of urbanization and the imposition of tendencies entirely foreign to Thrace, it remains isolated and at this stage finds no close comparanda in other settlement sites from the central and eastern Balkans (cf. Stoyanov 2006; cf. [Chapter 26](#)).

Seuthopolis provides a good example of a manifest regularity, repeated in many settlements that become prominent political centers and seats of members of the high aristocracy; developed quickly, often without continuity with earlier settlements in the same locality, within a short time they become central in the settlement hierarchy. Many such sites, however, lose their importance equally quickly or come to an end, as their livelihood was evidently closely bound to that of their founders and the political structures created by them. The duration of settlement occupation at Vasil Levski, Krastevich, Seuthopolis, and Sboryanovo was brief, ranging from a few decades to slightly more than a century.

In the last decade, in fact, the issue of whether or not some of the settlement forms widely distributed throughout Thrace ca. second half of the 1st millennium BCE were in fact royal residences has undergone an important development. Various ancient authors mention fortified small places, “thyrses,” that have been interpreted by modern scholars as towers or residences which served as “permanent homes of the Thracian aristocracy” or a “typical kernel of urbanization in Thracian settlement life” (Fol 1970, 166–168, with summary of the ancient sources). For a long time, this specific element of the Thracian settlement structure has had no convincing archaeological counterpart or, alternatively, the architectural complex excavated on the shores of Mandrensko Lake near Burgas was cited as a unique example (Dimitrov 1958; Balabanov 1984). The recent discovery of the residences near Kozi Gramadi (Khristov 2011, and earlier publications cited), Smilovene (Agre and Dichev 2010a, 214–217), Sinemorets (Agre and Dichev 2010b, 217–219), and Knyazhevo (Agre and Dichev 2013, 143–145) have revised this picture and confirmed the ancient sources. These compact architectural complexes are characterized by monumental architecture and often fortification; Knyazhevo is at present the only exception. On the other hand, the investigations at Sinemorets demonstrate that this settlement form, specific to Thrace, was in use not only in the heyday of early Thracian states, between the fifth and the first half of the third century BCE, but also during the later stages of the Hellenistic period.

Together with south and southeast Thrace the territory of northeastern Thrace is another major region that currently offers a good representative sample of the level of development and characteristics of the settlement system in Thrace during the second half of the first millennium BCE. As already noted, even in the later stages of EIA pronounced urban micro-regions with more distinct stratification gradually formed in this area. Information from written sources about the political development of the Getae (Stoyanov in press; cf. [Chapters 5 and 6](#)) also corresponds well with the data for the development of the settlement system in northeastern Thrace during the second half of the first millennium BCE. This part of Thrace is traversed by the lower reaches of the Danube, which suggests the potential for good natural interregional communications not only with the Pontic coast, but also to the west with the territory of central Europe. The river valleys of Yantra, Rusenski Lom, Krapinets, and Kamchiya, and those north of the Danube, like the Ardzhesh and Ialomita in modern South Muntenia, conditioned the development of a good road network and associated settlement system leading into the interior (Stoyanov 2000a, 57; Stoyanov in press). The eastern Balkan Mountains and several prominent uplands and hilly areas in turn provide opportunities for better protection.

Good natural and demographic conditions can be linked with the political development of the Getae. During the second half of the fourth century BCE in northeastern Thrace a well-defined settlement system with distinct settlement forms with different characteristics and functions can be detected.

Based on available archaeological data a formation of areas with high concentrations of settlements can be distinguished, such as those in the area of Byala and Borovo along the river Rusenski Lom, near Ispirih, on the plateau of Shumen, and along the northeastern slopes of Stara Planina with the surrounding valley of the Kamchiya River (Stoyanov 2000a, 58–62, maps 1–2; Stoyanov in press). There are recognizable elements of internal organization and functional specialization. In a number of fortified settlements, as on Tsarevets Trapezitsa (Dolmova-Lukanovska 1984; Lilova 2005, 107), Byala, Cherven, and Arkovna (Stoyanov in press), centers with associated administrative, economic and distributive functions are attested. Although these centers have been archaeologically investigated to different degrees, they possess the salient features of hubs with central functions, which play a leading role in the settlement system of high population density. In this system of strategically important sites are located smaller agglomerations with controlling and military roles. Whether larger fortresses, like those in Kravevo (Ginev 1998, 2–6) and Dragoevo, or smaller fortified posts, many of which are known in the regions of Provadia and Shumen or along the Rusenski Lom River, their position adheres to principles which are subject to a single political and administrative organization. The continuing social stratification of Thracian society finds its expression in a distinct hierarchy that developed

in the settlement system. These processes are most clearly recorded in the valleys of Hebros and Tonzos, as well as in northeastern Thrace – the areas that sustained the most stable and influential Thracian political and state formations.

As in the cases of Koprivlen and Pistiros in southern Thrace, urban centers were established in northeastern Thrace, whose development was linked to the growth of road and communication networks along with related economic and distributive functions. The early establishment of markets/emporia along the Danube took place toward the middle of the first millennium BCE (Irimia 2006, 250–253; Stoyanov in press). The abundant data for intensive trade discovered at the Getic village in Satu Nou on the right bank of the Danube provides another example of an emporion that developed along the main artery of communication toward the interior of Thrace (Conovici 2000, 75–76).

Undoubtedly the most prominent manifestation of centralization processes and stratification in the settlement system of Thrace arrives with the emergence of political capitals – the leading urban centers of various Thracian political formations. If southern Thrace has yielded the example of Seuthopolis, for northeastern Thrace such a role is played by the Getic city discovered in Sboryanovo near Ispereh. The analysis of data produced by many years of research has enabled some investigators to identify the Thracian settlement in Sboryanovo with Helis, the capital of the Getic ruler Dromichaetes – a political opponent of Lysimachus (Delev 1990; Stoyanov 2000b; Stoyanov in press, cf. [Chapter 5](#)).

The image that the city boasted during the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third century BCE corresponds to its leading position within the strong Getic state developed on both sides of Danube. In the fortified area of the settlement both residential and artisanal neighborhoods existed. Recent archaeological data show that, in the southwestern part of the fortified section of the city, the remains of a *basileia* – an internal quarter in which the ruling aristocratic elite resided (Stoyanov in press) – can be identified. Numerous residential neighborhoods and other urban areas of commercial and manufacturing character were located outside the city walls, with the total area of the city exceeding 30 ha. Archaeology shows that the city was destroyed by an earthquake in the middle of the third century BCE. Attempts to resurrect it failed to restore its previous role.

The site at Sboryanovo does not seem to have followed in its development the main trends outlined on the basis of the settlements of higher rank located in southern Thrace. The site's excavator rightly notes that, in its development of the individual elements of its urban character, architectural forms, and construction techniques, the settlement diverges from the rules of Greek and Hellenistic architectural features, which had been directly imported in some centers south of Stara Planina, but rather shows a regional variation of local

development (Stoyanov 2006; Stoyanov in press).

As in the period of the EIA, during the second half of the first millennium BCE the general characteristics of the settlements in west Thrace shows certain specifics that distinguish them from those developed in southern and northeastern Thrace. Unlike the well-defined major centers in the Upper Thrace Valley and the area between the Danube and West Black Sea coast, where powerful state formations of the Odrysae and Getae developed, here emerged smaller political units exposed to the strong influence of their neighbors from the southwest and east. Coastal areas with numerous Greek apoikiai, which in turn had a significant impact on the development of communications and the settlement system, also remained isolated from the inland central Balkan areas, although the close links of the Upper Strymon area and southern Morava valley with the North Aegean coast can be traced back to earlier periods. Further south there were many centers along the lower Vardar River and northwestern Aegean coast, which were directly related to the development of Macedonia. In this sense, Pernik fortress (Changova 1981, 52–100; Popov 2002, 135–142), located in the western periphery of Thrace, remains relatively isolated in the deep interior (cf. a more detailed discussion of Pernik in Popov 2008 and [Chapter 26](#)).

The emergence of settlements with central functions and similar features in different parts of the central Balkans can hardly be interpreted only with the acculturative policies and “civilizing” role attributed to Macedonia. Some sites trace their descent from earlier centers betraying leading roles long before the Macedonian expansion reached this region. In such agglomerations, the centers of small tribal communities can be discerned, which were located in the contact zone of the central Balkans and exposed to the cultural influence of its neighbors – Macedonia, the colonies on the North Aegean coast, the Odrysian kingdom, and Illyria. According to a recent hypothesis, the Pernik fortress can be identified with the capital of the Agriani (Delev 2014). The main problem in the analysis and interpretation of the settlement system in west Thrace during the Late Iron Age is that there are large areas where its elements are difficult to recognize, although during the Roman period large centers with a network of numerous satellite towns were planted in these areas. The situation in northwestern Thrace presents a similar case, where the current level of knowledge about the various elements of the settlement system during the Late Iron Age is insufficient.

In assessing scholarly research of the settlement system in Thrace during the second half of the first millennium BCE, we possess knowledge about a wide range of different types of settlement. There are recognizable: central places with central functions; larger or smaller fortresses/military posts with monitoring role; small fortified compounds (towers, residences, farms) belonging to different members of the aristocracy; agglomerations/markets directly related to trade operations; and settlements or parts of settlements

related to various manufacturing industries (see [Chapters 26 and 27](#)). Yet, there are certain gaps in our knowledge. One major type of settlement is unsatisfactorily documented – the village. Given the apparently numerous Thracians, the high demographic potential of many areas of Thrace, and the intensity of occupation and dual structure of Thracian society, the absence or extreme scarcity of rural establishments remains puzzling. Located in open flat areas or hilly and mountainous terrain, the lack of this main component in the settlement system – the small villages inhabited by ordinary people whose main livelihood was agriculture – is striking.

We have yet to identify the reason for this absence. It remains an open question whether such a gap is related to agricultural and livestock breeding practices, short-term occupation coupled with architecture of lightweight construction, or if the reasons should be sought elsewhere. In this context, there is a striking disparity between the number of sites recognized as settlements of lower rank and the most numerous archaeological sites related to the study of the ancient Thracians – the pit complexes (see [Chapter 11](#)). Their number has grown in the last three decades and now exceeds several dozen. The main problems related to their investigation developed mainly due to salvage excavations conducted on major infrastructure construction projects. As a rule such sites are found associated with fertile land with good access to water sources. One can reasonably question whether the absence of low-rank sites is due to their archaeological footprint, or low visibility due to the poor state of preservation. One of the reasons can be sought in mechanized agriculture developed on a large scale in the 1950s throughout the country. Mechanized plowing of land has heavily disturbed the topsoil. Recognition of open settlements such as Vinitsa (Dremsizova-Nelchinova 1967, 57–74) can be attributed to a terrain less affected by modern intervention.

The architectural parameters of such villages are simple and uniform: wattle and daub houses, built above ground or semi-subterranean leaving a stratum less than 10 cm deep. Traces of such structures are documented in the unfortified settlement at Halka Bunar, municipality of Chirpan (Tonkova and Sideris 2011). Since the remains of these buildings are relatively slight, their survival, detection, and investigation in the future is bound to become increasingly rare. It is reasonable to raise the question whether the numerous “pit sanctuaries” may represent traces of settlements less affected by modern intervention. Regardless of whether such a working hypothesis will be accepted or rejected, it is clear that in the identification of lower-rank sites with no representative functions, many questions remain open.

Another interesting aspect of the settlement system in Thrace concerns villages whose existence may be associated with more specialized functions. Alongside sites like Pistiros and Sboryanovo, where craftsmen quarters are known, recent excavations at Halka Bunar have made the subject even more relevant by producing evidence for pottery production (Tonkova 2000; 2002).

The general survey of the settlement system in Thrace during the Late Iron Age shows that it has become far more diverse. One may observe clearly distinguishable processes of the creation of multi-hierarchical stratification and the differentiation of specific functions. Based on the newly created political and economic environment these processes developed on a much larger scale, expanding beyond the boundaries of the small tribal communities. The settlement system is divided into different types of agglomerations which are distinguished by function, architectural style, organization, and degree of impact on the surrounding environment. By and large, it can be noted that the settlement system of the second half of the first millennium BCE demonstrates a much higher degree of development, in comparison with that of the earlier period. During these processes of centralization and stratification in Thrace, trends change frequently due to the short life of some newly established political formations; it should be noted that these processes reflect a trend toward globalization overcoming internal fragmentation between micro-regions.

It is an interesting question if we can talk about a direct continuity between the settlement system of the Late Iron Age and those of later periods, when Thrace was gradually included within the Roman provinces. The idea of continuity between the main Thracian settlements called “tribal centers,” “royal residences,” “cities,” and so on, reproduced often in the historiography, has gained no support, especially after the accumulation of new archaeological data (Popov 2005, 611–614). It could be argued that settlements with evidence for topographic and functional continuity are rather the exception.

It is true that our current knowledge about some of the prominent centers of Thrace, such as Bizye, Uskudama, Kypsela, and Perinthus prevents us from tracing their development during the pre-Roman period, but the overall impression is that few have retained their position in the settlement hierarchy. Moreover, sites like Vasil Levski, Krastevich, Pistiros, Seuthopolis, Sboryanovo, Pernik, and others ceased to exist by the end of the first century BCE. At the same time, in Roman towns, such as Pautalia, Serdica, Germanea, Augusta Traiana, Marcianopolis, and Diocletianopolis, evidence of early occupation on the same terrain is extremely slender and of non-representative nature. On the Danube limes at legionary camps and associated sites such as Nikopol, Gigen, Sexaginta Prista, and others, the data from the earlier period suggests that there is no direct continuity between Roman and pre-Roman settlements in terms of their functions.

It is noteworthy that the number of known settlements (of different ranks) dated to the second and first centuries BCE is considerably smaller than those of the fifth to third centuries BCE; whether this presents a temporary gap in our data or stems from a pattern associated with demographic and political processes experienced within Thracian society during this period is a matter

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Chapter 10

Dolmens and Rock-Cut Monuments

Georgi Nekhrizov

10.1 Megalithic Monuments in Thrace

The term “megalith,” from Greek μέγας (big) and λίθος (stone), was introduced by Algernon Herbert (1849), a British antiquarian. Two large groups of megalithic monuments are distinguished – polyoliths and monoliths. The dolmens and cromlechs belong to the first group, and the menhirs to the second. These terms of Celtic (Breton) origin have been established in scholarly discourse, despite the worldwide practice of assigning native names to the monuments. The origin of the term “dolmen” is in the expression *taol maen*, translated “stone table”; “cromlech” comes from *crom* (bent, curved) and *llech* (slab); and menhir from *maen* (stone) and *hir* (long, tall).

The megalithic culture is spread over a wide territory and despite its diverse manifestations both in time and space, there are remarkable correspondences in terms of structural and constructive principles. While the Western European megalithic structures date to the Neolithic and the Chalcolithic periods, those from Asia are assigned to the Bronze Age; those from the Balkans date to the Early Iron Age, and some North African monuments were built during the Hellenistic or Roman age.

In the Balkans the megalithic monuments are restricted to the southeasternmost parts of the peninsula and are categorically linked to Thracian culture. According to scholars of Thracian megalithic culture, the monuments are found in a region that generally coincides with what is conceived of as Southeastern Thrace, with the greatest concentrations in the Sakar, Strandzha, and Eastern Rhodope Mountains (Mikov 1933, 144; Venedikov 1976a, 32; Delev 1982b, 398–400, map 15; Delev 1984, 19; Özdoğan 1998, 37). The most common members of this group – the dolmens and the rock-cut tombs – have been linked to funerary rites. While dolmens can be found in all three mountain areas, the rock-cut tombs are mostly restricted to the Eastern Rhodopes.

10.2 Dolmens

An important prerequisite for dolmen construction is an available source of rocks suitable for splitting into slabs. Thracian dolmens use primarily granitic rocks (Kostov 2008, 164). In Strandzha and Sakar these are granites, also called South Bulgarian granitoids. Gneiss, another widely available rock with similar characteristics, is also utilized in the construction of dolmens. All

dolmens and dolmen-like graves in the southernmost parts of the Eastern Rhodopes are built of gneiss and gneiss-slate. Several of the Strandzha dolmens utilize limestone marble (Evrenozovo, Zabernovo, and Belevren); interestingly, nearby monuments utilize granite slabs (Agre and Dichev 2006).

According to the first examiners of the Thracian dolmens, their number in Sakar Mountain exceeds 600 (Venedikov and Aladzhov 1976, 54; Delev 1984, 19). The known dolmens in the Bulgarian section of the Strandzha mountains are more than 100, and approximately that many are registered also in the Turkish section of the mountain (Özdoğan 1998). A small group of dolmens is also found in the Northeastern Rhodopes, near the right bank of the Maritza River (Delev 1984, 20). Considerably more, probably over 100, are located in the southeasternmost parts of the Rhodopes, in the Byala River watershed (Triandaphyllos 1984; Nekhrizov 2010, 85). Several dolmens are also known on the Greek island of Samothrace (Moutsopoulos 1989, 247, figs. 1–4).

Most of these megalithic tombs have significantly deteriorated since their initial discovery and description in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Systematic study and survey of the monuments in the 1970s and 1980s, and again during the 2000s, have confirmed that a portion of these tombs had already been partially or completely destroyed (Delev 1984, 20). Such projects also located some previously unknown megalithic monuments. The results of the archaeological excavations on several dozen dolmens make possible the establishment of the chronology of their use and confirm beyond doubt their association with Thracian culture.

Despite established regional typological differences, the Thracian dolmens share many common features. They are situated on positive landscape forms: crests, less often slopes of low ridges, but always excellent vista points. The largest dolmens and those with the most complex plans are usually solitary, while those of smaller dimension and simpler plan are usually arranged in clusters of two to six. They are constructed of large roughly shaped stone slabs of local stone, although the finish of the interior is more careful; only the front slabs have two finished faces. Slabs were prepared in advance and set vertically in to the ground to form a burial chamber, usually rectangular in plan. Dimensions of the burial chambers in the dolmens can be remarkable, with the largest measuring up to 2.80×2.40 m and often more than 2 m high. In general the slabs used for the transverse chamber walls are fit between the slabs used for the long sides, sometimes in specially prepared furrows; in this way the long walls exercise pressure on the transverse walls and create structural stability. This design is not always followed strictly – sometimes only one of the short walls is fit into the long walls. Occasionally one or more of the lateral or transverse walls is made of two slabs placed side by side. An exceptional case is presented by several Sakar dolmens, with long walls made of two stacked slabs, the upper one placed at an angle set by an appropriate

beveling of the transverse slabs (Hlyabovo, Sakartsi, Oryahovo, Vaskovo). Specially cut triangular slabs were added at the bottom corners of the transverse walls of some of the larger Sakar dolmens (Hlyabovo, Vaskovo).

Sometimes the upper sections of dolmen walls incline inward, resulting in a trapezoidal cross- and lateral-section of the chambers. This simultaneously improves their stability and relieves roofing. The burial chamber and antechambers of dolmens are each covered by one large, coarsely finished slab, the weight of which further stabilizes the construction. In some instances, channels have been cut on the bottom surface of the roof slab in order to form a secure join with the lateral and transverse slabs (Ostar kamak). The slabs of the roof are always larger than the chambers they cover, thus providing an eave for the walls. The dolmens do not usually have specially designed floors: most commonly the leveled terrain alone functions as a floor, although some monuments have a floor paved with small slabs, while the burial chambers of others have floors consisting of one or two large slabs (Pelevun, Vaskovo).

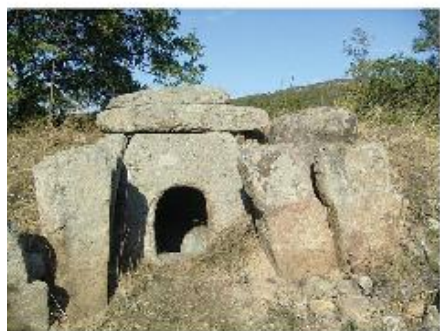
Dolmen entrances most commonly face south, southeast, or southwest; east or west facing entrances are less frequent; there are no northwestern or northeastern entrances. The entrances – quadrangular or vaulted – are cut into the middle of the front transverse slab for the Sakar and Strandzha dolmens, and laterally in the Byala Reka basin. In some instances the exterior of the entrance has a chiseled frame, indicating the likely use of a door or other device to close the monument.

The plans of Thracian dolmens are quite diverse. The principal element of the dolmen is the burial chamber. In some instances it is preceded by an antechamber, constructed by placing two lateral and one transverse entrance slab in front of the entrance wall of the burial chamber. The antechamber may be rectangular or trapezoidal, but is always narrower and lower than the burial chamber. Both the one- and two-chambered dolmens may feature a short corridor (dromos). Constructed of lower slabs, it is narrower than the succeeding chamber and is not roofed by stone slabs. Occasionally in front of the chamber two flanking slabs are placed which shape an open small hallway.

In some of the most representative Sakar and Strandzha dolmens several large slabs are set vertically beside the entrance (Sakartsi, Hlyabovo, Vaskovo, Kirovo, Evrenozovo) (Figure 10.1, 1–4). These slabs shape up façade walls, fortify the embankments in front of the dolmen entrances, and facilitate access. The Strandzha mountains provide examples of façades built of horizontally laid slabs (Belevren, Evrenozovo, Lalapasha). Study of several dolmens with façades has revealed very high concentrations of artefacts in the area in front of the façade, the date of which spans extended periods. Such finds may represent the combined remains of the funerary rites and commemorative rituals performed in front of the dolmen.



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Figure 10.1 Dolmens. 1. Burial mound with two dolmens near Vaskovo village, Sakar Mountain. Photo by G. Nekhrizov. 2. Dolmen in locality Byalata treva near Hlyabovo village, Sakar Mountain. Photo by G. Nekhrizov. 3. Dolmen in locality Nachevi Chairi near Hlyabovo village, Sakar Mountain. Photo by G. Nekhrizov. 4. Dolmen near Golyam Dervent village, Strandzha

Mountain. Photo by D. Kolev. 5. Dolmen near Granichar village, Strandzha Mountain. Photo by D. Kolev. 6. Dolmen near Pelevun village, Eastern Rhodopes. Photo by G. Nekhrizov.

With regard to layout and construction, P. Delev distinguishes three groups of built megalithic burial monuments – solitary dolmens, double dolmens, and dolmen-like cists (or more precisely dolmen-like graves). Most common are solitary dolmens. They can be further classified into four groups according to the number and type of their built compartments. Double dolmens are very rare, mostly restricted to Strandzha, and represent two solitary dolmens set side by side and sharing a common long wall. Dolmen-like graves are distinguished from dolmens solely on the basis of their smaller dimensions and the absence of an entrance (Delev 1982b, 405–407). Delev highlights the fact that cist graves are also found outside of the core distribution area of first millennium BCE Thracian megaliths, especially from the sixth century BCE onward (Delev 1982b, 404 n. 24). In his opinion the dolmen-like graves, due to their appearance and construction, as well as their coexistence with the dolmens, must be directly correlated with them.

Most scholars of megalithic burial structures in Thrace accept that all dolmens and dolmen-like graves were covered by a mound. According to them the lack of an embankment and the partial or total exposure of some dolmens is due to erosion and human intervention. Research in the Eastern Rhodopes, however, has established that in this region only some of the megalithic burial structures featured a mound. Regardless of formal type, some monuments were left uncovered, while others received a mound. Also, occasionally buried under a tumulus, dolmens and dolmen-like graves coexist within a single necropolis. Research in the Eastern Rhodopes indicates that erosion and grave-robbing do not result in the total obliteration of the tumuli embankments. Looters' trenches usually target specifically the graves. Erosion, on the other hand, does not explain those cases where a dolmen with a perfectly preserved embankment stands beside another domen entirely lacking such a covering (Nekhrizov 2010, 88–89).

It should be stressed that the embankment is almost always constructed in such a way that it covers the walls, but not the roof of the dolmen. The mounds associated with Thracian dolmens are without exception stone-and-earthen mounds. The burial structures are often encapsulated by a small stone mound or a stone concentration of different form, intended to reinforce the walls and drain rainwater (Figure 10.1, 4–5). Apart from soil, local stone, most commonly quartzite, was also included in the embankment. Consequently the mounds of dolmens and dolmen-like graves are distinguished by white quartzite stones visible on the surface. Some of the Sakar and Strandzha dolmen mounds were fitted with a krepis of vertically set

slabs or large stones at the foot of the embankment.

The walls of some famous Thracian dolmens feature groups of shallow depressions. These are conical, 3–4 cm wide, up to 1.5–2 cm deep, and were obviously produced by a drill. Although these do not outline figures, the depressions are considered to be decorative. Such have been found on dolmens and dolmen-like graves from the entire distribution area of the Thracian megalithic monuments, and even on the walls of the only known rock tomb from the Sakar Mountains, that near Hlyabovo ([Figure 10.2](#), 4).



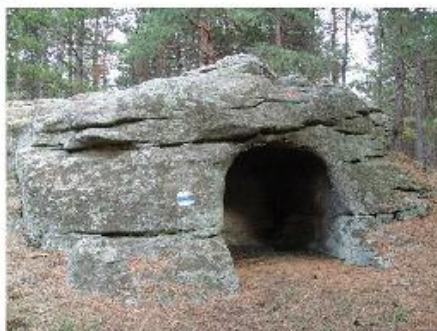
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Figure 10.2 Rock-cut tombs. 1. Rock-cut tomb “Kara in” near Pchelari village, Eastern Rhodopes. Photo by G. Nekhrizov. 2. Rock-cut tomb near Skalina village, Eastern Rhodopes. Photo by G. Nekhrizov. 3. Rock-cut tomb “Hambar kaya” near Pchelari village, Eastern Rhodopes. Photo by G. Nekhrizov. 4. Rock-cut tomb near Hlyabovo village, Sakar Mountain. Photo by G. Nekhrizov. 5. Cromlech near Dolni Glavanak village, Eastern Rhodopes. Photo by R. Mikov.

Two recently studied dolmens from Derventski heights, in western Strandzha, near the village of Golyam Dervent, stand apart from all other Thracian monuments in terms of their specific decoration ([Figure 10.1, 4](#)). Built of granite slabs, both dolmens are designed with two chambers with a short roofed hallway. Ornaments are engraved on the front walls of the antechambers, on both sides of the entrance. While considerable damage to the front walls of both dolmens hinders the reconstruction of the entire composition, fragments found in situ, and those scattered in the vicinity, suggest that panels of spirals and meanders were rendered in low relief. A slab fragment with a representation of a labris, likely mounted above the entrance, is particularly fascinating. Although this symbol is typical in the region, the style and the overall design of the sculpted ornament of the two Golyam Dervent dolmens are strongly reminiscent of similar monuments in the Caucasus and Western Europe.

Research on the monuments of the Thracian megalithic culture has deep roots, but it has yet to deliver a dolmen with a completely preserved burial. Partial human skeletons, and sometimes elements from more than one individual (Mikov, 1955, 34, fig. 9; Delev 1982a, 219; Akman 1997, 161, Abb. 7) have been found in a number of monuments in the Sakar and Strandzha Mountains. A recent upsurge of interest in Thracian dolmens has resulted in the accumulation of new evidence for burial practices associated with megalithic monuments (Agre 2005; Agre and Dichev 2006; Nekhrizov 2010), which substantiates the opinion that the principal burial rite associated with dolmens is inhumation (Delev 1982a, 219). It has already been established that dolmens were not intended as individual graves, but for prolonged reuse. Archaeological excavations of two dolmens near Zubernovo in Strandzha have revealed the remains of respectively 14 and four individuals in the burial chambers, with the older bones relocated near the long walls in order to make room for subsequent burials (Agre 2005, 104). A similar point has emerged from the excavations of the Lalapaşa dolmen, where the antechamber revealed the remains of four individuals (Akman 1997, 161). Excavations on a mound with two dolmens – one large, the other small – near Vaskovo in Sakar, lead to even more intriguing discoveries ([Figure 10.1, 1](#)). Skulls and bones from eight individuals were discovered in the smaller dolmen, the dimensions of which preclude it from receiving an adult person. Most likely, it functioned as an ossuary for remains from the repeated burials in the large dolmen (Nekhrizov 2010, 92). Dolmens functioned most likely as family or lineage tombs receiving several generations of the members of the local Thracian tribal aristocracy (Delev 1984, 31; Agre 2005, 105; Nekhrizov 2010, 92).

Excavations of dolmens have contributed to clarifying the chronology of their construction and use. Finds associated with the monuments include pottery and bronze trinkets – fibulae, rings, earrings, and bracelets, but never

weapons. The date of these finds indicates that dolmens were used as burial structures from the onset of the Early Iron Age until the end of the period (eleventh to sixth centuries BCE). Late Iron Age finds have also been recovered, however, from many of the excavated dolmens (Hlyabovo, Mladinovo, Glavan, Vaskovo in Sakar; Kirovo, Belevren, Lalapaşa in Strandzha; Pelevun, Zhelezino, Kobilino in the Eastern Rhodopes). The use of some of these monuments for burial obviously persisted through the second half of the first millennium BCE. It is possible that the later finds indicate maintenance of commemorative rites, performed long after the final dolmen interment.

Excavations in the Eastern Rhodopes revealed a two-chamber dolmen with a dromos, which was constructed in the Late Iron Age ([Figure 10.1](#), 6). It is located near Pelevun and some of its structural features are, at present, unique. Foremost among those is the overextended plan, consisting of a façade entrance, a long dromos of low vertical slabs, an antechamber nearly square in plan, and a large burial chamber with a single floor slab. The shorter corridor connecting the two chambers is unprecedented; the two chambers of all previously known two-chamber dolmens from Thrace share a common transverse wall with an entranceway. Absent in this dolmen are also entrances cut into the walls. Instead, each transverse wall is made up of two narrow slabs set to mark the corners, with a central gap reserved for the throughway. A compromise with the purely megalithic approach to construction is the superstructure of three horizontal rows of slabs upon the northern dromos wall (Nekhrizov 2010, 89). This dolmen, revealing materials from the end of the fourth to the early third century BCE, is the latest monument of this type so far excavated in Thrace.

The group of dolmens and dolmen-like graves from the southeasternmost ranges of the Rhodopes Mountains is as a whole distinguished from those in the Sakar and Strandzha Mountains by their relatively smaller dimensions and the use of thinner slabs for the walls. Another peculiarity, observed in some of the better preserved monuments, is the entrance, which is cut not at the center, but in the side of the front slab (Chernichevo, Roussa, Kotronia). In the case of the Sakar and Strandzha Mountain dolmens, as well as dolmens from elsewhere in Thrace, the entrances are always centered into the front slab. In addition, there are as yet no known dolmens along the Byala River with composite long walls, or with façades formed by slabs fixed into the ground. Based on those features exclusive to the Southeastern Rhodopes, these monuments have been assigned into a separate group – the group of the Eastern Rhodopean dolmens (Nekhrizov 2010, 93).

The construction of some dolmens exhibits some structural principles that are otherwise atypical in megalithic monuments, but known from other types of monument with a similar function – the rock-cut tombs. One or more walls of several Sakar Mountain dolmens are formed by cutting into bedrock instead

of slabs driven vertically into the ground (Hlyabovo, Glavan, Dripchevo). Notably, the dolmen of this type near Hlyabovo is in the immediate vicinity of the rock-cut tomb with ornamentation of depressions on the walls discussed above (Panayotov 1976, 50–52, drawings 57–66, figs. 85–97). The rock tomb near Hlyabovo is the only one from Thrace with a preserved slab door for the vaulted entrance, identical in appearance to the design of the front of a dolmen (Bonchev 1901, 694). The walls of a rock-cut grave documented near Bashtino in the Eastern Rhodopes were also modeled on the exterior, thus visually resembling a dolmen. These examples demonstrate the commonality between the rock-cut tombs and the dolmens – burial monuments, constructed and used by the Thracians of the mountainous regions of the Southeastern Balkans during the Early Iron Age.

10.3 Other Megalithic Monuments

Cromlech

The only monument of this kind in Bulgaria is found in the Eastern Rhodopes near Dolni Glavanak ([Figure 10.2](#), 5). It is situated on a low ridge-top above the left bank of the Arda River. The boundaries of the circle are defined by vertically set large, roughly shaped blocks of local hard volcanic rock (rhyodacite). Despite their rough finish the blocks are approximately identical in both shape, that of an irregular trapezoid with thicker base, and size, 1.20–1.50 m tall, on average 0.90×1.20 m at the base, 0.40–0.60 m thick. Some preserve marks of later intervention – they are chipped or tipped. The blocks are set directly upon the bedrock, without special foundation. Their stability is ensured by their shape, but some are additionally secured by smaller stones. The vertical blocks are arranged at almost regular intervals between 0.75 and 0.90 m, with smaller blocks arranged horizontally in the interspaces. This alignment is disrupted in the eastern section where two vertical blocks are set side by side, backed by a third block, now leaning heavily to the east. Nine blocks still stand vertically, while three others have fallen near where they were initially set up. They are arranged in a circle with an internal diameter of 10 m, open to the southeast. The void in the southeastern sector is occupied by a rock slightly raised above the ground and it seems likely that originally no blocks were installed here. The line is interrupted also in the north, by a missing block, probably knocked out of position and removed. Several additional large stone pieces and many smaller rocks are scattered in the vicinity.

Two smaller structures are located nearby. Structure No. 2, located 15.30 m southeast of No. 1 (the cromlech), is an oval enclosure, with an external diameter of 3.40 m measured east–west and 2.80 m measured north–south. It

is constructed of medium-sized roughly hewn stones arranged in one or two rows. Structure No. 3 is 18.70 m south of No. 1. It is identical to structure No. 2 in construction, and is also oval in shape with diameters of 6.40 m measured east–west and 5.40 m measured north–south.

The 1999 excavations of the three monuments established that No. 1 was constructed during the eighth–seventh century BCE, and remained in use through the Late Iron Age. Many features of the Dolni Glavanak site make it possible to classify it with the ritual sites on peaks, extensively attested throughout the mountainous regions of Thrace. It is distinct from those monuments, however, with respect to both construction method and monumentality. The vertically set evenly spaced large stone blocks tracing a perfect circle are an incarnation of the megalithic ethos. By analogy with similar monuments in Western European megalithic culture, the site near Dolni Glavanak can be designated as a megalithic monument of the “cromlech” type. The two stone enclosures (Nos. 2–3) near No. 1 were constructed during the time when No. 1 was in use and are undoubtedly associated with it. The finds from Nos. 2–3, and chiefly the burnt human bones, substantiate their interpretation as funerary structures. It is hardly accidental that despite the considerable time lapse between the finds from the two structures, they have identical construction and that both received remains of children cremated outside the boundaries of the features. We are presented with the obvious traces of traditional customs (ritual burials, sacrifices?), performed in the vicinity of the megalithic monument and associated with the cult activities taking place there (Nekhrizov 2000; 2004).

Menhirs

There is believed to be only one menhir surviving at present in Bulgarian territory. It is located near Ovcharovo, in the Sakar Mountains. The menhir, locally known as “Chuchul kamak,” is 2.20 m tall and represents a crudely shaped irregular conical column of trachyte rock, with its wide end driven into the ground (Aladzhev 1997, 196). Not long ago it was the focal point of local festivities on St. Dimitri’s day.

There are reports from different Bulgarian regions of “thrust stones” preserved *in situ* or already demolished; they may occur as solitary stones or in clusters. These sites have often been appropriated by later cult practices and ritual activities (Mitova-Dzhonova 1979, 55, 63, 64; Rashev 1992).

A complex of stones that have been driven into the ground is found in an extensive area near Kırıkköy in Turkish Thrace (Özdoğan 1982, 47, figs. 26–29). A survey of the site fixed its limits and layout, distinguished stone clusters, agglomerations, and earthworks, recorded the principal orientation of the clusters and the solitary stones, identified some of the principles guiding their arrangement, recorded differences in origin, color, decoration, and so on.

However, the exclusively nondestructive survey strategy failed to secure evidence clarifying the site's chronology and function (Erdogu, Erdogu, and Chapman 2000).

10.4 Rock-Cut Megalithic Sites

Rock-cut tombs

About 50 of the known rock-cut tombs can be positively associated with Thracian culture. All but one from Sakar Mountain are found in the Eastern Rhodopes, most within the Bulgarian national territory, with only three in Greece. There is additional evidence for several rock-cut tombs that have been destroyed. Usually the tombs are cut in to soft, easy to work rock – most commonly volcanic tuff, less often in sandstones (near Benkovski, in Podkova, and by Golemantsi); however there are also some cut into hard rocks (such as those near Gorno pole cut into rhyodacite). Irrespective of rock type, the cliffs in which the tombs are cut always share the following features: they are sizeable, providing adequately for the intended volume of the tomb; firm and robust, free of cracks; and also easily accessible. Thus the tombs are most commonly cut into suitable sections of large outcrops (e.g., at Ak Kaya near Pchelari), or, if such were unavailable, into a suitable solitary cliff (e.g., Hambar Kaya near Popovets). Unlike the rock-cut niches cut into vertical walls, often in inaccessible locations, access to the rock-cut tombs is always convenient and the entrances are easily reached.

The tombs are usually solitary, but there are some examples of two tombs either immediately adjacent (Vodenicharsko, Potochnitsa, Ovchevo) or in close proximity to one another (Pchelari-Ak Kaya, Podkova, Golemantsi). The two necropoleis, consisting of four uniform structures in each, located about 800 m apart in the village territories of Pchelari in the “Hambar Kaya” locality (Figure 10.2, 3) and Dolno Cherkovishte (Nekhrizov 1994), are exceptional.

The rock-cut tombs can be classified into two large groups. The first includes tombs with a closed-off burial chamber, tentatively defined as cave-like (Figure 10.2, 1). These feature a slightly vaulted hallway with a frame for the slab door. The entrance to the burial chamber is primarily from the south, southeast, or southwest, but examples with western (Momchilgrad-Koshcha) and northeastern (Raven, within the village limits) entrances also exist. The doorways are typically trapezoidal or vaulted. The plan of the burial chamber is oval or a trapezoidal with rounded corners. The dimensions range from 1.80×1.60 m to 2.90×2.60 m; the long side of the trapezoid is quite often closest to the entrance. The vaulting of the chamber starts at floor level, and the dome rises to 1.50–1.90 m in height. A considerable deviation from these spatial parameters is recorded in one of the tombs near Skalina in the Yokar

Kestene locality (Figure 10.2, 2). This tomb features a spacious open hallway with oval plan and a wide entrance with a well-preserved grove for the door-slab; from here a vaulted throughway leads to a tiny oval burial chamber, about 0.80 m across and 0.50 m high (Venedikov 1976b, 91–93).

Two of the tombs of this group display similar graffiti decoration on their walls (Pchelari-Ak Kaya and Momchilgrad-Koshcha). The graffiti, which were scratched with a sharp tool, render primarily geometric figures – circles and rectangles, hatched or crossed by lines, some framed by dots. Similar ornamentation is found in two rock-cut tombs near Petrota in northern Greece (Triandaphyllos 1984, 157–162, figs. 20–26).

In addition to the above-mentioned sites, other rock-cut tombs are located near Podkova, Bivoljane, Ovchevo, Skalina-Alisoman tepesi, Mazhentsi, Yagnevo, Veslets, and Moryantsi. To the cave-like type belongs also the only preserved rock-cut tomb in the Sakar Mountains, the one near Hlyabovo (Figure 10.2, 4) (Panayotov 1976, 52).

The tombs of the second group are distinguished by the presence of a second opening, at the top, closed off by means of a massive stone slab. As a consequence of the top opening, these tombs are more vulnerable to natural forces and ill intentions. Thus most lack lintels and are in ruins in some sections of the walls, while only a small portion of the burial chamber survives from others. The poor state of preservation makes definition of their features extremely difficult. The better preserved tombs of this group indicate a widespread practice of modeling a passage to the hallway that resembles an open dromos, with a floor commonly lower than that of the antechamber. The hallways are also open, less well defined in comparison to the first group, and also normally lower than the burial chamber. The preserved entrances to the burial chambers are vaulted. The burial chambers typically have trapezoidal plan, cross- and transverse section. Their size ranges from 1.50 × 1.35 m and standing to a height of 1.20 m for the smallest tomb (near Dzhanka), to 2.87 × 2.40 m, with a preserved height of 2.02 m for the largest (near Vodenicharsko). While the tombs of this group have a much more variable orientation, south, southeast, and southwest facing entrances still prevail. Clustering of tombs is more frequent in this group (Pchelari, Dolno Cherkovishte). The best preserved examples with an intact lintel are the two tombs near Vodenicharsko and those near Gorno pole and Veslets. Other relatively informative structures of the type are found near Rogach, Potochnitsa, Golemantsi, Dzhanka, Ovchevo, Mazhentsi, and the northern Greek village of Nipsa.

In some instances grooves cut near the entrances of the tombs of the first group (Moryantsi), or by the top opening of the monuments of the second group (Pchelari, Vodenicharsko, Rogach) drain rainwater (Figure 10.2, 3).

The burial chambers of some rock-cut tombs are fitted with additional

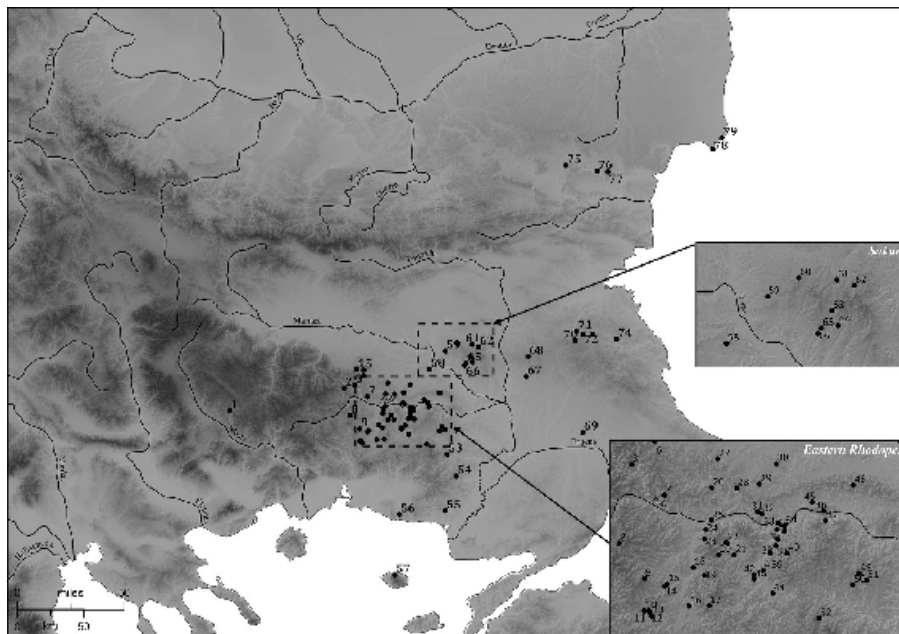
fixtures: burial beds (Terzi Kaya locality by Ovchevo: Venedikov 1976b, 87), platforms – beds? (Yagnevo: Venedikov 1976b, 96), vaulted niche – probably a bench (Aliosman tepesi locality near Skalina: Venedikov 1976b, 93).

Evidence for the construction of the rock-cut tombs, including the techniques and tools employed, is also quite limited. As a consequence of the erosion of the top layer of the soft rocks in to which they were cut, almost no tool marks survive on the interior walls. Judging by the better preserved areas it is quite possible that the walls were diligently evened and smoothed. Yet, tool marks have been identified at several tombs and consist of rows of measured juniper strokes at the floor–wall juncture.

Some Eastern Rhodopes structures could be interpreted as unfinished rock-cut tombs (those near Gorno pole, near Yagnevo, and near Podkova).

The distribution of the two groups of rock-cut tombs is not firmly set and they are often found in proximity to one another. Mapping reveals micro-regions with a high concentration of burial structures of both groups. An example of such concentration is the area of Dolno Cherkovishte and Pchelari, where a total of 12 tombs have been recorded in the valley on both sides of the Arda River – two cave-like and 10 with a top opening. A second such micro-region includes the area of Ovchevo and Skalina, where a concentration of eight tombs has been recorded; four are cave-like, three have a top opening, while the eighth has been destroyed and its type cannot be determined. In the soft sandstone cliffs near Benkovski and the communities of Mazhentsi, Yagnevo, and Veslets were cut six tombs – four cave-like and two with a top opening; an unfinished tomb from Yagnevo must also be included in this number.

There is also a good number of solitary rock-cut tombs of both types, such as those near Moryantsi, Svetoslav, Popovets, Dzhanka, Rogach, and Momchilgrad. Similar monuments – usually rock-cut niches – however, are often found in their vicinity.



Map 10.1 Sites mentioned in [Chapter 10](#). 1. Dospat region 2. Bezvodno 3. Zhenda 4. Nochevo 5. Sarnitsa 6. Angel voyvoda 7. Dazhdovnitsa 8. Ardino 9. Vodenicharsko 10. Yagnevo 11. Mazhenci 12. Veslec 13. Benkovski 14. Ovchevo 15. Skalina 16. Podkova 17. Chavka 18. Momchilgrad 19. Chukovo 20. Raven 21. Tatul 22. Bivolyane-Harman kaya 23. Chomakovo 24. Lisitsite 25. Shiroko pole 26. Gorna krepost-Perperikon 27. Golemantsi 28. Bashtino 29. Popovets 30. Kralevo 31. Byal kladenets 32. Svetoslav 33. Pchelari 34. Dolno Cherkovishte 35. Potochnitsa 36. Oreshari 37. Moryantsi 38. Krasino 39. Dzhanka 40. Sbor 41. Kovil 42. Gorna kula 43. Vransko 44. Rogach 45. Dolni Glavanak 46. Gorno pole 47. Madzharovo 48. Gluhite kamani 49. Kobilino 50. Zhelezino 51. Pelevun 52. Chernichevo 53. Roussa 54. Kotronia 55. Nipsa 56. Petrota 57. Samothrace 58. Ostar kamak 59. Ovcharovo 60. Glavan 61. Hlyabovo 62. Sakartsi 63. Dripchevo 64. Mladinovo 65. Vaskovo 66. Oryahovo 67. Lalapasha 68. Golyam Dervent 69. Kırıkköy 70. Belevren 71. Kirovo 72. Granichar 73. Evrenozovo 74. Zabernovo 75. Madara 76. Venchan 77. Staroselets 78. Kaliakra 79. Kamen bryag

In many instances the rock-cut tombs can be associated with nearby Thracian settlements or sanctuaries. An excellent example of this is provided by the tombs near the villages of Raven and Bivolyane, located in proximity to and possibly in association with the large rock-cut complexes of Tatul and Harman Kaya. The close spatial relationship has been emphasized as circumstantial evidence for the identification of the rock-cut tombs as belonging to the Thracian culture. More certain evidence, which is also informative about the chronological limits of their use in the Early Iron Age, is provided by artifacts and burial remains found in the monuments from

Shiroko pole and Pchelari (Mikov 1955, 29; Nekhrizov 1994). The burials in the Shiroko pole and Pchelari tombs (classified into the two separate groups) are inhumations. This was most likely the ritual practiced in all Eastern Rhodopean rock-cut tombs. This hypothesis is further supported by the discovery of model funerary beds in some tombs there.

The Eastern Rhodopean rock-cut tombs are not unique to the territory of ancient Thrace. The close analogies between the monuments from the Eastern Rhodopes and those from Northeastern Bulgaria have been repeatedly highlighted by all students of Thracian megalithic culture. While the morphology of cemeteries in northeastern Bulgaria (Kamen Bryag – Yaylata, cape Kaliakra, Venchan, Staroselets, Madara) is indeed similar to that in the cemeteries in the eastern Rhodopes, these cemeteries seem to have been created and used in the Roman or Late Antique period and are thus much later than those in the eastern Rhodopes. The walls of some of the later tombs even have engraved cross-signs (Salkin and Toptanov 1988).

Some monuments from the Eastern Balkan Mountains have also been interpreted as rock-cut tombs (Delev 1982b, 394–395; Banov 1988). Another such monument was discovered recently in the region of Dospat in the Western Rhodopes (Gergova 2010, 36). While some of these features resemble the rock tombs of the Eastern Rhodopes, none preserves conclusive evidence of chronology or function.

Rock-cut tombs are found throughout the Mediterranean in regions with suitable natural landscapes. Although they appeared and evolved in different cultural contexts and chronological frames, there are a number of formal analogies between them and the Thracian rock tombs (Nekhrizov 1999, n. 57).

Rock-cut graves

Another type of rock-cut burial structure found in the Eastern Rhodopes is distinguished from the rock-cut tombs by the absence of hallways or lateral entrances, and by their smaller dimensions. On the other hand some of the monuments, interpreted as rock graves, share many features with the rock tombs – trapezoidal transverse and cross-sections, tapering top opening with a groove for a door-slab, and a groove for draining rainwater near the opening. Rock-cut graves are usually found grouped into cemeteries cut into bedrock that has been stripped by erosion (Kulov 2002, 107–113). Unlike the practice of carving rock-cut tombs and niches, which was restricted to the Early Iron Age, the tradition of carving rock graves carries on into the Middle Ages. The later rock graves are almost undistinguishable from those of the first millennium BCE. Since these graves are always empty, without any traces of burial, and often quite defaced, they can be difficult to date. Hence the number of rock-cut graves that can be related categorically to Thracian burial practices is small and includes graves near Kovil, Bashtino, Gorna Krepost,

and Gorna Kula.

The necropolis near Kovil is located on the summit of the long ridge Ak Kaya. The remains of a Thracian sanctuary from the first millennium BCE have been detected on the rocky elevation in its western end (Kulov 2002, 109, fig. 6).

The grave near Bashtino, Alla Kaya locality, was cut into the top of a naturally-occurring pyramid-shaped volcanic rock and may take advantage of a naturally occurring depression in the stone. The shape of the grave is an irregular rectangle measuring $1.70 \times 1.40 \times 1.86 \times 1.58$ m, and 1.50 m deep. Both wall faces are coarsely worked. Despite its significant size, the absence of an entrance defines the feature as a grave. Interestingly, the modeling of the exterior of the walls makes it appear dolmen-like (Kulov 2002, 108, fig. 5d).

Rock-cut graves with Late Iron Age materials were found in the Perperikon rock-cut complex and near Gorna Kula (Kulov 2002, 111).

A special place among the rock-cut burial structures is occupied by the graves at Tatul and Angel voyvoda, hubs of intricate rock complexes. The graves are situated in the uppermost sections of cliffs displaying numerous traces of intentional modification. The structures are reached via steps cut into the cliffs; platforms accompanied by steps, niches, channels, and basins have been cut into the nearby cliffs. It is confirmed that these complexes were the site of active human involvement beginning in prehistory and continuing into the Middle Ages, which illustrates continuity of worship at the locations across millennia. Undoubtedly the impressive complexes were distinctly charged ritually and can be defined as rock sanctuaries (Nekhrizov 1999, 28).

Rock-cut niches

Rock-cut niches are the most numerous group of rock-cut megalithic monuments. Unlike rock-cut tombs and rock-cut graves, their distribution is exclusively restricted to the Eastern Rhodopes, and to its central parts in particular. They are distributed across territory including the middle reaches of the Arda River, along with the catchment areas of its tributaries – the Borovitsa, Perpereshka, Varbitsa, and Krumovitsa Rivers – and the upper reaches of Olu Dere (Nekhrizov 1996, 9, fig. 1).

The niches are usually carved into suitable rocks – volcanic tuff, less often sandstones (in the vicinity of Benkovski); some examples of niches cut into limestone (e.g., those by Kralevo) or hard stone (e.g., from the Madzharovo area) are also known. They are normally cut into the vertical face of prominent cliffs, often at a considerable height, and can occur singly or in clusters. There is a marked preference for prominent, visible cliffs, with the niches situated primarily on the sunlit faces; niches are also found in the shade, however. Additionally, some niches are cut into caves (Oreshari-

Dishlik dere) (Figure 10.3, 6) or rock crevices below ground level (the Gluhite Kamani complex) hidden from the sun. Quite often niches are located under rock brims that prevent immediate exposure to rainwater (Kulov 2002, 114). Channels cut above the niches, fulfill as recorded in the Gluhite Kamani complex, fulfill a similar function (Nekhrizov et al. 2012, 222, fig. 4b).



1



2



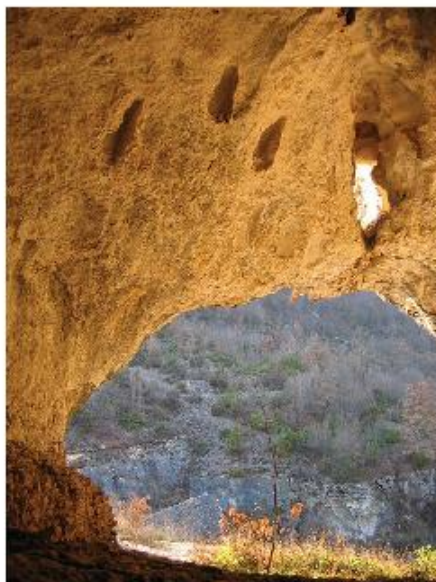
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Figure 10.3 Rock niches. 1. Rock niches in the complex “Gluhite kamani,” Eastern Rhodopes.

Photo by G. Nekhrizov.

2. Rock niches near Dolno Cherkovishte village, Eastern Rhodopes.

Photo by G. Nekhrizov.

3. Rock niches near Chukovo village, Eastern Rhodopes.

Photo by G. Nekhrizov.

4. Rock niches near Nochevo village, Eastern Rhodopes.

Photo by G. Nekhrizov.

5. Rock niches near Bivoljane village, Eastern Rhodopes.

Photo by S. Ivanova.

6. Rock niches in cave near Oreshari village, Eastern Rhodopes.

Photo by G. Nekhrizov.

Rock-cut niches most commonly have curvilinear expanding chambers, a vertical opening, and a flat floor. These niches range in height from 0.60 to 1.00 m and in depth ca. 0.40–0.45 m; they measure 0.30–0.50 m in width at the base and 0.20–0.40 m in width at the top (Kulov 2002, 112, fig. 8).

Individual exceptions are also known (Nekhrizov et al. 2012, 220). Almost all larger complexes include a few structures that deviate from the most popular type with trapezoidal opening: their openings are more properly rectangular or oval, but this shape is often the result of erosion. Examples of horizontal and double niches can also be cited. Although the shape of their opening is again trapezoidal, here it is either horizontally set, or with a double width.

Somewhat different are the so-called vaulted niches, which are very rare (Gluhite Kamani). Their chambers repeat the familiar form, but the opening is vaulted and wider (Nekhrizov et al. 2012, 220, fig. 3).

Unfinished niches, abandoned at various stages of carving, are relatively common and offer a good idea of the sequence of niche construction. Once the suitable location was selected, the mason first sketched the entrance frame, usually an isosceles trapezoid; next the rock within the frame is carved out and the chamber is shaped, working from the top to the bottom, while widening and rounding off the space. Once the niche is finished the walls are carefully leveled and smoothed. It is possibly for this reason that tool marks cannot be detected in both rock-cut tombs and niches. Unlike the tombs, however, the carving of the niches into vertical cliff faces, sometimes at a height of more than 50 m, called for considerable skill and safety equipment.

Usually 3–100+ niches are carved into a given cliff face (**Figure 10.3**).

Solitary niches are an exception (Ovchevo, Sbor, Kralevo). The niches are clustered, but the argument for a special arrangement within the clusters is

weak – the location of the individual structures seems to be a consequence of the availability of suitable surface. Often the niches are carved in clearly marked rows (Figure 10.3, 3–4), yet frequently they are haphazardly scattered along the vertical face (Figure 10.3, 1–2).

To date we know of more than 100 sites with rock-cut niches. In some instances they occupy solitary cliffs (Ardino, Krasino, Chukovo, Chomakovo, Lisitsite, Chavka, Zhenda, Byal kladenets), and others are on rock circlets and in gorges, where the niches are scattered in smaller or larger clusters over dozens of cliffs, sometimes along several kilometers (Sarnitsa, Duzhdovnitsa, Dzhanka, Bezvodno, Raven, Moryantsi, Vransko).

The greatest concentration of rock niches is found in the Gluhite Kamani rock complex (Figure 10.3, 1). Systematic study has revealed a total of 459 niches over 0.25 square kilometers (Nekhrizov et al. 2012, 219). More than 15 clusters of niches cut into the vertical rock walls of the canyon are found near Dolno Cherkovishte, Oreshari and Moryantsi in the Arda River valley, as well as in the gorges of its tributaries. Other more significant concentrations of niches include those from Bezvodno, Sarnitsa, and Nochevo.

The rock-cut niches still await a specialized interdisciplinary analysis. Scholars agree on their association with cult, and link them to Thracian burial beliefs, as well as to solar and rock cult (Welkow 1952, 35; Delev 1982b, 414; Naydenova 1990, 91–93; V. Fol 2000; 2007). The function of these monuments is another matter.

The most widely accepted interpretation associates the niches with Thracian burial rites (Venedikov 1976b, 99, 109; Delev 1984, 30; Nekhrisov 1994, 10; 1999, 26; Kolev 1965, 209; Kulov 2002, 115). The hypothesis that the rock-cut niches, tombs, and graves are functionally related is based not only on their geographically restricted distribution and frequent concurrence within the same sites, but also on the trapezoidal entrances of the niches and the trapezoidal plans, cross- and transverse sections, and entrances of the rock-cut tombs. An additional argument for contemporary use and common function of the rock-cut monuments from the Eastern Rhodopes is supplied by the similarities in their carving and the careful finishing of their interiors. To this we must also add that some niches have a cutting to receive a slab-door, which feature is also present in the entrances of most rock-cut tombs. The idea that the rock-cut tombs, graves, and niches are the principal burial features of the Eastern Rhodopean Thracians is based on the established topographic proximity between those monuments and Thracian sanctuaries, settlements, and fortifications, as well as on the absence of tumuli and flat necropoleis dated to the Early Iron Age in their distribution area (Nekhrizov 1994, 10; 1996, 9). In this connection some scholars propose that while the rock-cut tombs were used by the Thracian aristocracy, the niches received urns with the cremated remains of Thracian commoners, with the niche clusters functioning as necropoleis (Aladzhov 1997, 152; Venedikov 1976b, 109).

Without categorically refuting the link between the rock-cut niches and Thracian burial practices, other scholars subscribe to a different interpretation. They maintain that niche carving was a one-time ritual act and assume that they were used to house sacred objects during particular days associated with a cosmogony or initiation rite (V. Fol 2000, 117; 2007, 284). Based on analogy with rock-cut monuments and complexes from Anatolia and the Mediterranean, the Eastern Rhodopean niches are thus interpreted as epiphany throughways (V. Fol 2007, 284–285) or as symbolic doors to the Afterworld (Kuzmanov 2001, 115). The close parallels between Thracian and Anatolian sites associated with the cult of Phrygian Cybele lead to a hypothesis that associates the local phenomena with the cult of the Mother Mountain as a Great Mother-Goddess hypostasis (A. Fol 1994, 256–264; Vassileva 2001; V. Fol 2007, 300–325).

Several more hypotheses attempting to explain the “Eastern Rhodopean rock-cut niches” phenomenon have also been presented (Kostov 2001). Some scholars hold different opinions about the chronology of the niches and the other rock-cut features, assigning them to a much earlier date (Raduncheva 1988).

The most commonly distributed Thracian rock-cut monuments – the niches – pose the greatest number of unresolved questions of function and chronology. Potential resolution of these problems will depend on the development of sophisticated, interdisciplinary research projects, that combine cultural and comparative study of these monuments with geological, petrological, and geochemical analyses, among others.

Translated by V. Bineva

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Chapter 11

“Ritual Pits”

Rumyana Georgieva

11.1 Introduction¹

In Bulgarian historical literature the term “ritual pits” denotes archaeological features, occurring singly or in clusters, dug into the earth and situated below or in the embankments of burial mounds, or within sanctuaries or settlements. More specifically, these include pits dug into burial mounds or the ancient terrain, with variable form and content, but no obvious utilitarian purpose. In keeping with their controversial character, such features are described in various ways: some pit complexes are dubbed “fields of ritual pits,” “negative features,” or “pit sanctuaries,” and the pits themselves are defined as “sacrificial,” “cult,” or “ritual” in character. The number of sites containing such features has risen of late, prompting polemics and encouraging novel approaches to their interpretation.

11.2 Location and Nature

Ritual pits below or in the embankment of burial mounds²

There are many examples of pits studied below or within burial mounds. Pits in these locations can be earlier than, contemporary with, or later than the sometimes extremely rich burials located within the tumuli. The pits dug into such tumuli are distinct from both ancient and modern looting trenches with respect to shape, size, and fill; they are secondary to the burial, simultaneous with the mounding, and precede tumulus completion. The most widely known pits of this type come from, for example, two tumuli within the Duvanlii necropolis, Plovdiv District,³ some of the Istria tumuli, Constanța County, Romania, and from the tumulus covering the Sveshtari tomb with Caryatids, Razgrad District (Georgieva 1991, 1–3). Pits with a narrow neck and broad bottom, in the shape of a beehive, are prevalent within this group, but there are also cylindrical and conical pits. Their fill consists normally of sterile soil, although some pits contain stones, pottery sherds, charcoal, and ash near the bottom. The interior of some is heavily plastered with clay (Agre 2001, 53), while others preserve traces of fire (Filov 1934, 16). The content and location of these pits suggests that they were a constituent element of Thracian commemorative rites (Georgieva 1991, 2–3; Agre 2001, 56).

In addition to pits dug into a tumulus, some were also situated at the base of

tumuli (Filov 1934, 12; Agre 2001, 54–55). Other tumuli were built over one or more pits of different size, shape, and content, which had previously been dug into the ancient terrain (Georgieva 1991, 3). In such cases, pits are sometimes associated with hearths, clay platforms, and altars, and are often immediately adjacent to a grave.⁴ There are 137 pits below Kralevo mound, Targovishte District, some of which are associated with decorated altars (escharae)⁵ and hearths.⁶ More than 100 pits of Archaic date were discovered within a space enclosed by a deep ditch and buried under a tumulus overlying the western section of the Aşağı pınar prehistoric settlement near Kırklareli, Kırklareli Province, Turkey.⁷ Notably, some mounds constructed over pits contain no burials, while in the rest, the grave is later dug next to or within the tumulus.

Some scholars believe that pits found below tumuli are directly or indirectly associated with the burial, which implies their ritual nature and the intentionality of the mounding act (Georgieva 1991, 3–4; Ginev 2001, 13–16). Their fill is regarded as the material residue of ritual acts, performed on the spot or elsewhere, which may include: the construction of clay altars or use of portable hearths; animal sacrifice; pouring of libations; and sometimes the deposition of sherds from vessels that had been employed during the ritual and later shattered.

The possibility that pits below mounds might be associated with an earlier habitation or use of the area is almost never discussed.⁸ A key cause is the absence of extensive surveys of the areas surrounding tumuli, which eliminates the possibility of establishing whether the pits are restricted below the mound or if, as some rare instances illustrate, they are more widespread in the vicinity. Another reason is a product of the lack of a close chronological relationship between the finds included in the pits, the artifacts from the embankment, and the burial inserted in the mound. It is possible to consider chance coincidence of location as an explanation for those instances where several centuries separate the construction of the pits and the mounding of the tumulus or the insertion of a burial within the tumulus, as, for example, in the case of tumuli with Roman age burials erected over Iron Age pits. The date of the mounding of a tumulus, however, is not always clear, nor are the reasons why a particular place was deemed appropriate to receive a tumulus. On the other hand, in those cases where there is a close chronological relationship between pits and a tumulus mounded over them, as at Kralevo, one must ask why a mound would have been erected precisely atop a vacated or destroyed village, with the contemporary but subsequent insertion of a burial in the mound. For such an act would violate the otherwise common practice in Thrace of situating burial mounds on ritually clean places. A third reason for considering pits buried under tumuli as expressions of cult, and not related to settlement, stems from their similarity to a category of features documented in sanctuaries and settlement sites that are currently interpreted as having had a

ritual function (see below).

Ritual pits in settlements

Pits found within settlement boundaries are normally associated with subsistence or everyday life. Many garbage, storage, or utility pits are documented on Thracian sites; hence criticism that Bulgarian scholars have misinterpreted precisely such features as ritual is unfounded (Baralis 2008, 140–142). At the same time, dozens of pits with likely non-utilitarian function have been studied at different first-millennium settlement sites, and their interpretation is complex and diverse. Many of these pits are found at Pistiros, Pazardzhik region, which offers the best opportunity to study intra-mural negative contexts, for the appearance, function, and development of all excavated pits can be thoroughly assessed within the framework of the site's stratigraphy.⁹ Many of these pits have a clear utilitarian purpose and are associated with, for example, metal production, the disposal of construction waste, and food storage. Particularly interesting are the pits in the sectors along line B on the excavation grid of Pistiros, situated in the midst of fragments of floors, stone clusters, and escharae. Their fills consist of fragments of clay altars and of everyday objects, as well as large quantities of pottery sherds, many of which are decorated with stamps, graffiti, or other ornament. A comparable complex has been studied along the A5a–A14 line, where escharae with adjacent pits, as well as buried storage vessels (pithoi), are also found. The pits of this complex contain coins, altar fragments, and pottery sherds. The Pistiros excavators believe that the two groups of pits and the associated escharae from the site's second and third occupation phases form a single complex and interpret them as evidence for ritual performance, in which the pits served as repositories for offerings (bothroi) (Archibald 1999, 427–268; Archibald 2002a, 112–118; Lazov 1996, 69–72). Support for this hypothesis is offered by analysis of the eschara surfaces and their immediate vicinity, which offer evidence for the pouring of libations of wine and scented plant oil, accompanied by the nearby offering or burning of grasses and seeds (Stout et al. 2003, 85–88). According to Z. Archibald, interpretation of the pits at Pistiros is further complicated by the presence of a third category of pits, which were in origin utilitarian, but later redefined as depositories for “burying” objects that had been removed from circulation (Archibald 2002a, 116; 2002b, 322–326).

A similar explanation is put forward for some of the Hellenistic pits from Kabyle. They are filled with grey-brown soil, decayed or burned mud brick, ash, charcoal, domestic and building ceramics, fragments of escharae, loom weights, spindle whorls, coins, and, sometimes, animal bones. It is presumed that some of these pits were originally associated with the town's pottery production (one of the pits in sector IX contained almost 20 pottery wasters); some were likely dug to procure material for mud brick, while others, judging

by the presence of scattered grains, were likely used for storage. It is established that the pits in the granary (*horreum*) area were filled simultaneously or within a very short period, ca. 200–175. Excavators assume that the deposition of garbage and construction refuse was not simply a practical necessity, but also symbolically charged, since traces of previous habitation were not simply removed from the site and discarded, but buried in proximity to the granary (Khandzhiyska forthcoming). A complex of pits also existed adjacent to the settlement site of Koprivlen, Blagoevgrad region (see below).

Pits with possible ritual function were unearthed in area 4 of the so-called “Artisans’ neighborhood” in the Thracian town near Sboryanovo, commonly identified as ancient Helis, Razgrad region. In an area where normal building remains, hearths, and other features are absent, there are several pits that differ in form and fill from those discovered in other parts of the settlement. They contain black soil, fragments of plaster, pottery sherds with seals and graffiti, and everyday objects. In one, the skeleton of a large dog in anatomical order lays upon a layer mixed with charcoal and animal bones. It is presumed that the digging and filling of the majority of the pits in area 4 was the result of a ritual act performed ca. 275–250 (Stoyanov n.d., 167–172).

Among the most recently discovered examples of non-utilitarian pits within settlement boundaries are those from the Thracian production, cult, and trade center at Halka Bunar near Gorno Belevo, Stara Zagora region, which was active from the seventh to the early third century. Use of the site from the seventh to fifth century is attested only by the pits. Those dating to the Classical period were often dug in the form of vessel shapes and sealed by a layer of clay altars in their upper portion, or contain a clay altar at the bottom. The early Hellenistic settlement is represented by the remains of several wattle-and-daub residential or utility structures, one with an *eschara* in the floor, as well as pottery kilns. Various types of pit have been discovered near the houses, some of which are interpreted as sacrificial in function. Their fills include: abundant pottery sherds, some with graffiti; coins; and many iron tools. At the bottom of one such pit, beneath a 70 cm layer of burned plaster, there was revealed a clay platform, covered with ash, charcoal, pottery sherds, charred animal bones, and coins (Tonkova 2002, 148–196; Tonkova and Sideris 2011, 85).

A combination of residences, hearths with unclear context, and many pits of diverse form and content are documented in many settlement sites from Thracian sites located in Romania. While it is presumed that at least a portion of the pits in these sites are ritual, excavators emphasize that distinguishing them from other types of pit can be problematic, since pits are multifunctional features (Sîrbu 1996, 13–15).

Similar pit complexes are also known from the lower reaches of the Vardar (anc. Axios) and Maritsa (anc. Hebros) rivers. Despite the lack of clear traces

of residential architecture, they are interpreted variously, as remains, for example, of: subterranean dwellings, as at Karaburnaki, northeastern Greece; storage pits; and garbage pits associated with ceramic production or metalworking installations, as at Fagres, Rizia, and Rigio, also in northeastern Greece (analysis of the northern Greek sites: Ilieva forthcoming). The deposition of destruction debris in preexisting pits, attested at Pistiros and Kabyle, is also known at Fagres.¹⁰

Ritual pits in sanctuaries

Some of the so-called “ritual pits” are found in sites interpreted as rock sanctuaries or peak sanctuaries. In these locations the pits are situated in a separate place within the temenos, as at the sanctuary near Babyak (Tonkova 2007, 55) or are found associated with other negative features, like ditches, or clay altars (escharae), as in the sanctuary near Tsruntcha in the western Rhodope mountains (Domaradzki 1994, 82–83). It is thought that pits in sites of this category were in use at the same time, some functioning for storage, others for deposition of remnants from sacrifices performed in the sanctuary; their fills include vessel sherds, animal bones, charcoal, and fragments of ritual hearths.

The largest number of “ritual pits,” however, have been discovered in the so-called “pit sanctuaries” or “fields of ritual pits.” These are scattered over an extensive territory on both sides of the Balkan range (Stara Planina); the apparent concentration of sites of this type in the Thracian lowlands is a consequence of recent, intensive excavations in preparation for large infrastructure projects. More than one hundred sites of this type have been discovered, with the number of pits in each ranging from several dozen to several hundred. The pit complexes are most frequent in the “Maritsa-Iztok” energy complex in the region of Stara Zagora and along the route of new highways that are currently under construction. “Ritual” pits of this type have also been recognized at sites in Romania and elsewhere (Balabanov 2002, 544–545; Bozkova and Nikov 2010, 218; Sîrbu and Peneş 2011, 437–457; Matsumura 2007, 97–110).

Topography and Archaeological Context

“Fields of ritual pits” are found in diverse geomorphological contexts, most commonly on arable land in the vicinity of a water source. In rare instances they are found in a sterile context, devoid of evidence for any additional contemporary activity (Bozkova 2002, 88; Tonkova 1997, 593; Lichardus, Fol, and Getov 2001, 119). Usually their locations are indicated by broad surface scatters of artifacts, combined with an absence of traces of permanent or perishable building materials, hearths, or other household structures. Artifact concentration on the surface usually points to an underlying pit.

Because of this, and also because the artifacts scattered through the humus-type soil are identical to finds in pit fills, such finds are thought to come from destroyed pits. After removal of topsoil, which does not contain cultural deposits, the pits appear as dark spots against the bedrock.¹¹ Often their arrangement seems deliberate, with a governing spatial organization sometimes characterized by the grouping of several pits around a central pit, distinguished by its size, wealth of inventory, or the character of its fill (Vulcheva 2002, 115–116; Tonkova 2003, 487–491; Tonkova and Savatinov 2001, 99; Tonkova 2010, 202); others appear irregularly set. The distances between the pits are random, with some immediately adjacent to one another; sometimes pits overlap one another, perhaps indicating long-term use of a particular sector of the site. Features made up of several pits with complex outline, interpreted as multicomponent structures with special status, are more rare (Bozkova and Nikov 2010, 217–218). In some pits the assemblage of artifacts seems so haphazard that they are interpreted as “depots” for ritual objects that one day would be used in rites, and so, by extension, would be deposited in other pits (Vulcheva 2002, 113–114; Tonkova 2002, 154–156).

Some sites feature ditches enclosing the space occupied by the pits or isolating the sector with the earliest pits (Vulcheva 2002, 114; Tonkova 2010, 200–202; Lichardus 2001, 136–137). The fill of these ditches resembles the contents of the pits that they enclose; a recent controlled experiment illustrates that, under the combined action of anthropogenic factors, erosion, and sedimentation, a ditch may fill in less than a generation (Lichardus et al. 2001, 31–33). There are also instances of sites where graves are found between pits or in their vicinity; in such cases, graves and pits are sometimes contemporary.¹²

Chronology and Stratigraphy

Initially considered a typical late second- and first-millennium phenomenon, “ritual pits” have recently been recognized on Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze Age, Roman, and even Medieval sites. Complexes dating to the second half of the first millennium are most numerous, a finding that may be a consequence of traditional research focus on this period, as well as presumed demographic growth at this time. There are examples of topographic and chronological continuity, including pit complexes in use from the Early through Late Iron Age. The horizontal stratigraphy of the first-millennium sites points to a progressive expansion: the pits of each chronological period are horizontally displaced from their predecessors and successors (Nekhrizov and Tzvetkova 2012, 181; Tonkova 2010, 199–200). Examples of pits of different age adjacent to one another are also known, however. Although the structure of most of these pits may resemble the result of long-term anthropogenic sedimentation, the majority were backfilled in the course of a single event and not over an extended period. Furthermore, it is established that not all

negative features of this type were in fact sealed complexes, as there are many instances of intentional collection of asynchronous objects. As a result, the date of the pit backfill is provided by the most recent artifact (Nekhrizov 2006, 422).

Form, Construction, and Dimensions

The repertoire of pit shapes is quite rich. Often they are classified based on their resemblance to geometric figures (conical, biconical, cylindrical, hemispherical) or everyday objects (beehive, pear-shaped, bell-shaped, barrel-shaped, hour-glass). Although rare, there are also rectangular,¹³ as well as asymmetric pits. Frequently, pits have a narrow opening and a body that rapidly expands in width. Pits from multiple sites reproduce characteristic Iron Age vessel forms (Vulcheva 2002, 105; Tonkova 2010, 202) (Figure 11.1). In some complexes, there are marked preferences, which may change over time, for pits of a particular form, but in general there is no correlation between the form and size of pits and their contents.



Figure 11.1 Pit with the shape of a clay vessel from the archaeological site near the village of Ovchartsı, province of Stara Zagora.

Photo by Krasimir Nikov.

According to the specifics of the terrain, or to their original function, some pits are partially or entirely lined with clay (Bonev and Aleksandrov 1993, 1, 28; Vulcheva 2002, 105–106), or are walled up with mud brick (Filov 1934, 16). There are also pits with one or more clay lenses that seal the pit's fill at a

certain level, after which use of the pit may continue (Nekhrizov 2006, 400). Sometimes the seal consists of layers of sterile soil (Leshtakov et al. 2006, 141). There are instances of: hearths built on top of filled pits (Bozkova and Nikov 2010, 215); pits with modeled clay hearths or altars at the bottom (Figure 11.2);¹⁴ or deposited fragments of escharae and andirons (firedogs), as well as waste from kilns or domestic ovens (Tonkova and Sideris 2011, 85; Bozkova and Nikov 2010, 215). The most commonly attested practice is the “closing” of pit mouths with fragments of hearths and plaster from floors and walls. In certain cases, stone, either unworked, crushed, or in the form of pebbles and cobbles, is used in their construction: when not included in the fill, stone can be used to pave or line the bottom of a pit, or to frame or cover its mouth (Agre and Dichev 2006, 102). Pithoi with deposits identical to “ritual pits” have also been found occasionally; it is therefore presumed that they functioned identically to such pits, namely, that they were used as ritual structures and not in their typical capacity as storage vessels. Paleobotanical analysis has confirmed the absence of grains in such vessels. Consequently, and also due to the utilization of pithoi fragments in the construction of some pits, the term “pit-pithoi” has been introduced (Vulcheva 2002, 106, 113).



Figure 11.2 Pit with clay feature at the bottom (from the site near the town of Lyubimets, province of Haskovo).

Photo by Krasimir Nikov.

The size of the pits falls within broad ranges; erosion or long-term cultivation has often made it difficult to establish the original depth and diameter at the mouth. Usually the diameter at the level of the bedrock is 0.50–2 m, while that at the bottom is 1–2 m, with a depth of 0.15–1.5 m. There are also cases of shallow pits with much broader necks, as well as features up to 3 m in depth.

Contents

Pit fills from the various sites are similar. Sometimes they are homogeneous, consisting of soil that is uniform or varying in color and structure, devoid of artifacts, or nearly so, and in general reminiscent of fertile soil. Pits with fills of this category are considered “empty” and it is presumed that they received libations or other offerings that have left no distinguishable material trace. Common, too, are pit fills deep black in color and “greasy” in texture, characteristics which indicate the presence of the residue of decayed natural fats. Fills of this type almost invariably include irregular concentrations of charcoal; evidence of fire built within pits, however, is extremely rare and, when present, typically occurs at the bottom of the pit. The sedimentation of the rest of the pits displays features determined by both site topography and recurrent filling strategy: charcoal, intact vessels, intact or fragmented hearths, and osteological finds are found near the pit bottom and stones and plaster fragments by the mouth. The fill is dark brown to gray-black in color, markedly different from the nearby soils and mixed with a broad range of materials, including: fine pieces of burnt clay, ash, and charcoal; fragments of wall plaster with distinct rod or plank imprints; remains of domestic ovens or manufacturing kilns; fragments of decorated escharae; andirons; carefully arranged vessels; pottery sherds; household items, such as loom weights, spindle whorls, and grinding stones; tools, like stamps for decorating pottery, awls made from antler, knives, and chisels; coins; fragments of metal vessels; intact or fragmented trinkets; idols and miniature cult figurines; and stones. Vessel sherds deposited within these pits are purposefully selected, with a marked preference for those with ornament, graffiti, or a stamp. Fragments of the same vessel are frequently recovered within different pits at a considerable distance from one another. Paleobotanic analysis reveals that pit fills seldom contain charred wood, usually oak, or edible plants; among the latter, wheat, barley, millet, rye, peas, lentils, vetch grains, grape seeds, and wild fruit pits are all known (Vulcheva 2002, 113; Nekhrizov and Tzvetkova 2008, 334).

Many pits contain animal bones, mostly from domesticated animals, like sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs; isolated pits preserve the remains of one or more species and individuals. Finds of fish, mollusks, and game animals, as well as of inedible plants, are relatively rare. It is supposed that the bones of edible animal species represent the leftovers of ritual food. Whole animals were also deposited in the pits. Most commonly these include dogs, less often horses and other species; they are deposited in anatomical order or dismembered. Bones and skeletons are recovered at different levels, among vessel sherds, household items, ash, and charcoal.¹⁵ The presence of animal bone in these contexts is suggestive of ritual killing of animals in Thracian funerary practice. There are recorded instances of buried sucklings, including species

commonly consumed by humans, like pigs and deer, as well as others, like dogs. Some scholars argue that this practice is analogous to some ritual elements attested for the Greek Thesmophoria or Attic Skirophoria.¹⁶

Pits with human bones comprise a special category. The fill of these pits is identical to the fills present in other categories of pit, including, for example, soil, ash, charcoal, and pottery sherds; such pits maintain their normal appearance even after being used for burial. The human remains belong to persons of different sex and age, with a greater frequency of Infans I and Infans II individuals in some regions (Nekhrizov and Tzvetkova 2012, 182–183). The number of individuals buried in a pit varies; occasionally they are accompanied by animal bones, fruits, and grains (Tonkova 2010, 208). Most common are individual human bones, usually skull components.¹⁷ There are also instances of the bones of one or more individuals arranged in anatomical order, as well as human bodies that have been dismembered, sometimes by slashing, and placed in the pit prior to flesh decomposition.¹⁸ Additionally, there are finds of one or more perfectly preserved skeletons, usually placed in an abnormal position, most commonly face down, as well as bodies with confirmed traces of violent death.¹⁹ Infrequently, there are discovered around some individuals: personal items, like clothing pins (fibulae); household items, such as spindle whorls and loom weights; cult figurines; and andiron sherds. Pits with human remains, however, constitute a negligible share of the total number of pits within a single site. On the basis of archaeological evidence and written sources on Thrace and the Thracians, many scholars have recently suggested that these pits preserve human sacrifices. It is assumed that these were rare incidents and only performed under exceptional circumstances.²⁰ Another opinion holds that the apparent taboo on burying young children within Thracian cemeteries is one of the possible reasons for the discovery of those individuals in the Early Iron Age pits (Nekhrizov and Tzvetkova 2008, 316). Additionally, it is assumed that individual human bones in some pits might have been removed from bodies that had decayed elsewhere.²¹

So far the human remains in the so-called “ritual pits” have not been considered remains of intramural burials, not only because these pits are regarded as ritual in function, but also because such a hypothesis fails to address many questions, such as: why are the examples so rare; why would these burials be placed within the possible boundaries of a settlement; what was the status of the people inserted in the pits; why are the human remains anatomically incomplete; why are there cut marks on the bones; what is the criminal or ritual reason for the violent death; why are the human remains buried in already established pits with household, manufacturing, garbage, or ritual function, and not in grave pits.

11.3 Interpretation and Discussion

The first scholar to mention “ritual pits” in Thrace was Bogdan Filov, in relation to the Duvanliy necropolis near Plovdiv, where one of the tumuli yielded over 100 “sacrificial” pits, in his interpretation (Filov 1934, 16). The Duvanliy pits, alongside those discovered in approximately 20 other locations, were systematically studied as a group in the 1990s (Georgieva 1991, 1–10). It is hypothesized that they have a ritual character and that the activities associated with their construction and fill represent an expression: of fertility cult, in the case of those features occurring outside of cemeteries; and of cult of the dead, in the case of pits below and in tumulus embankments. Pit complexes outside settlements and cemeteries are labeled open-air sanctuaries, in which the pit is a kind of primitive altar; different kinds of Thracian cult sites are included in this list (Domaradzki 1994, 81). Subsequent studies list the likely deities to which such pits were dedicated: Cybele, the Great Mother-Goddess, and Hecate (Fol 2007, 334–338; Balabanov 2002, 543). The presence in isolated pits of buried remains of human bodies in disturbed anatomical order or with proven traces of violent death can be interpreted as the remains of human sacrifices, which were carried out in exceptional circumstances (Tonkova 2009, 503–522). Comparison with ritual practices from territories neighboring Thrace has inspired suggestions that the form of cult demonstrated in the “pit sanctuaries” is related to worship of motherhood, fertility, and renewing nature that is traditional to the eastern Mediterranean (Kotova 1995, 82–86, 137–149).

The presence of “ritual pits” within the limits of rock sanctuaries, in the “sacred sectors” of certain settlement sites, as well as in the embankment of individual tumuli, is currently undisputed. The disparity, however, between the number of so-called “ritual sanctuaries” and that of excavated first-millennium settlements arouses skepticism and suggests that pits found in such complexes should be regarded as settlement remains or that they should not be uniformly interpreted.²² Nevertheless, despite the lack of adequate answers to many of the questions that pit complexes pose, their ritual function is generally agreed upon.

Pits almost always have a primary and a secondary function; establishing a distinction between the two is an important condition for defining the nature of each site (Lichardus et al. 2001, 216–217). Therefore, attempts to formulate categorical criteria for the assignment of pits into utilitarian and non-utilitarian categories are destined to fail, as the analysis of the form and fill of each pit rarely provides clear evidence about their original purpose, which may have been: to extract soil; for drainage, storage, or garbage disposal; in relation to some industry; or solely for the purpose of some ritual. To date, despite established horizontal and vertical stratigraphy on some sites, neither the relationship between these pits with respect to location and date, nor their hypothetical link to ground structures within sites exclusively made of pits can be comprehensively discerned. In the absence of traces of any kind of

architecture above the pits, it is impossible to decide whether they were located outside or inside the limits of some buildings or settlement sites, and thus the question of whether the pits with remains of human and animal remains, assuming that these died of natural causes and not as the result of ritual killing, for example, were ever intra- or extra-mural is still open. The recurrent content of pits points to a uniform process of filling, but it is unclear whether this was a one-time event or happened over an extended period; there is similar uncertainty about whether the artifacts included in the fill were accidentally or intentionally selected. Nor is there any clear-cut answer to questions like: why some pits concentrated within small areas were enclosed by a deep ditch, with fill identical to that of the pits; why domestic life, represented by so many luxury items in the pit fills, lacks associated settlement and residential architecture; why some pits were built immediately next to escharae and contain large quantities of andirons and ritual hearths, which are otherwise found only in ritual settings within settlements and cemeteries; why at the bottoms of others ritual hearths have been modeled or deposited; why the pits received materials from different ages; why were high value and still circulating currencies cast in the pits; why are decorated or inscribed vessel sherds prevalent; why are pieces of the same ceramic vessel found in pits spaced far apart; why were some of the items deposited in the pits still good for use; why, if so many dogs were kept, meaty kitchen leftovers were deposited in the pits; why, against all basic rules of hygiene, were humans and animals buried close to possible residences; why are victims of natural or violent death, or human remains in general, found in archaeological contexts resembling trash disposal containers.

One of the few possible answers to the questions formulated above is based on the hypothetical existence of an invisible boundary between profane and sacred, rational and irrational, which, during the period of study, allowed apparently incompatible structures with utilitarian and non-utilitarian content to exist in immediate proximity to one another or led to a ritualization of everyday activities. The fact that non-utilitarian pits are found in a growing number of Thracian urban centers supports the idea that the complexes defined as “pit sanctuaries” might be remains of settlements, from which only the pits with different functions, some of which were obviously created or reused for non-utilitarian ends, are preserved. While such a formula would permit the definition of a considerable portion of the pits as ritual, as in the case of, for example, the pits with human remains, those with escharae or andirons built in them or built nearby, those containing cult figurines, precious deposits, and even those used for “burying” artifacts and features after the end of their use-life,²³ it cannot convincingly explain the purpose of the rest.

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Guide to Further Reading

Beginning in the 1990s, many articles appeared, consisting of publications of dozens to hundreds of "ritual pits" and syntheses on the monuments assigned to this category: Georgieva 1991; Paunov, Evgeni. 1998. "Zhertveni i ritualni yami v Drevna Trakiya: izvori, razprostranenie i opit za interpretatsiya," in *Stipendianti na Fondatsiya "Otvoreno obshtestvo" za 1997*. Sofia, 4–12; Archibald 1999; Balabanov 2002; Tonkova 2003; Konova, Lyubava. 2007.

“Sveshtenodeistviya ‘po obichaya na predtsite.’ Kam interpretatsiyata na yamnoto svetilishte v mestnostta Kostadin cheshma pri s. Debelt,” *Annali*, 1–3: 9–24; Hawthorne, K., V. Varbanov, and D. Dragoev. 2011. “Thracian Pit Sanctuaries: Continuity in Sacred Space,” in *Early Roman Thrace. New Evidence from Bulgaria*, edited by Ian P. Haynes, *Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series* 82. Portsmouth, RI, 59–83. The number of publications on the subject is growing exponentially. Most studies present newly discovered complexes of “ritual pits,” promptly accompanied by the first critiques of the one-sided interpretation of these sites: Baralis 2008.

“Ritual pits” are now recognized in Neolithic (Nikolov, Vassil. 2011.

“Neolithni yamni svetilishta,” *Arheologiya* (Sofia), 1: 7–25; Nikolov, Vassil. 2011. “A Reinterpretation of Neolithic Complexes with Dug-Out Features: Pit Sanctuaries,” *Studia Praehistorica*, 14: 91–119), Chalcolithic (Raduncheva, Anna. 2003. “Kasnoeneolithnoto obshtestvo v nashite zemi,” *Razkopki i prouchvaniya*, 32 (Sofia)), Bronze Age (Kostova, K. 2003. “Communication through and in the Religion in Ancient Thrace during the Early Bronze Age (According to Archaeological Data),” in *Early Symbolic Systems for Communication in Southeast Europe*, vol. 2, edited by Lolita Nikolova, *BAR International Series* 1139. Oxford, 131–133), Roman Period (Torbatov, Sergei. 2007. “Trakiysko yamno svetilishte ot rimskata epoha krai Snyagovo,” *Arheologiya* (Sofia), 46–57), and even Medieval sites (Melamed, Katya. 1996. “Yamite krai s. Sedlare, Kardjaliysko,” in *Godishnik na Departament Arheologiya, Nov Bulgarski Universitet*, II–III. Sofia, 252–269).

Notes

- 1 All dates referring to ancient monuments or events are BCE unless otherwise noted.
- 2 Recent classification of the pits according to their character and location: Nekhrizov and Tzvetkova 2012, 178.
- 3 The pits are detected in Kukova and Bashova tumuli. Those in Kukova mound are of the beehive type, with a diameter of 0.50–2.50 m and a depth of up to 2 m. Most of those are reportedly empty, with just some ash, charcoal, animal bones, pottery sherds, a coin, and, in two instances, pieces of human bone near the bottom (Filov 1934, 12–16, 59).
- 4 Certain clay plastered platforms are interpreted as altars; they have a diameter of 1.5–2 m, bordered by an edge 8 cm wide and 10–35 cm tall along the periphery (Agre 2001, 53).
- 5 An eschara is a low clay platform, nearly square, and decorated. Escharae are found at many Hellenistic sites throughout Thrace, typically in roofed spaces and in both rural and urban sites with special status, as well as in

funerary contexts (Krasteva 2011, 271–294).

- 6 The Kralevo tumulus is 6.5 m high and 38–40 m in diameter. The pits in its base are dug into the sterile soil, with a diameter at the mouth of 0.60–3.20 m and a depth of 0.15–1.45 m. The subsequent layer is 0.70–0.75 m thick and contains anthropogenic materials, including eight escharae and 19 hearths scattered over different layers and locations. The site is interpreted as a cult complex, functioning from the second half of the fourth to the end of the first quarter of the third century, when it was covered by a tumulus. Sometime in the second quarter of the third century, a grave for a Thracian nobleman was dug near this mound and both the grave and the original mound were combined below a common embankment (Ginev 2001, 8, 41).
- 7 The ditch is 3 m deep and 7 m wide and traces a perimeter 100 m in length. The pits contain intact forms and sherds, animal skeletons and select animal bones, and small metal artifacts. The complex was created between the eighth and the sixth centuries. Materials for the mound, measuring 38 m in diameter, were extracted in part from the remains of a nearby Chalcolithic settlement; the mound was later flattened to the ground and destroyed. There is no evidence of a burial below the mound. The site is interpreted as a sacred place (Özdoğan 2001, 59–60).
- 8 One of the exceptions is a Roman age tumulus from the area of Didymoteicho, Evros regional unit, Greece, with four pits filled with wall plaster pieces preserving post imprints, animal bones, flint blades, bone tools, spindle whorls, and pottery sherds. The pits are considered garbage pits, suggestive of nearby Bronze Age and Early Iron Age settlement, which may have provided the soil used in the first layer of the tumulus (Triandaphyllos and Terzopoulou 1995, 473–485).
- 9 For a synthetic treatment of the Pistiros pits, see Karadzhinov forthcoming.
- 10 At Fagres, excavations revealed many pits with likely utilitarian function. Those of the first half of the sixth century are filled with animal bones, fragments of building materials, and domestic pottery, with sherds from one vessel often scattered in pits at a considerable distance from one another. Destruction remains are deposited in preexisting pits and it is believed that the cause of the destruction is some natural cataclysm in the early fifth century: see Nikolaidou-Patera 1996, 835–844.
- 11 There are instances of pits recognized only after the humus layer is removed by means of heavy excavating machinery during development or other activities, which results in the loss of information about their archaeological context.
- 12 For an example of Early Iron Age graves found within a fifth to first half of the fourth century pit complex in the Malko Tranovo site, see Bozkova and

- 13 Pits with walls lined with clay and set on fire ($2.2 \times 1.7 \times 0.40$ m) are found at Koprivlen: Vulcheva 2002, 105; cf. Balabanov 1999, 69.
- 14 Among the most intriguing examples in this category is the feature modeled at the bottom of a pit from the mid fifth century in the Dana Bunar 2 site (excavated by K. Nikov, unpublished), located on the left bank of the Maritsa River near Lyubimets; see also Khristova 2009, 58–61.
- 15 Dogs, a pig, and a horse are found at Koprivlen (Vulcheva 2002, 111–112); dogs and a hare in Svilengrad, Haskovo region (Nekhrizov and Tzvetkova 2012, 181–182); a dog and a deer in Malko Tarnovo, Burgas region (Tonkova 2010, 208).
- 16 In the Skirophoria, small animals were cast into pits or chasms and in the autumn their remains later were mixed with the sowing seeds; in the Thesmophoria, sacrificial animals were placed together with sacred objects and images rendered in dough; see, most recently, Nekhrizov and Tzvetkova 2012, 192.
- 17 Isolated skull bones are found at: Debelt, Burgas region; Bagachina, Montana region; and Yabalkovo, Haskovo region. From Koprivlen, mixed remains of three adult individuals were found in one pit and a child mandible in another. Mixed bones of at least five children were recovered from Malko Tarnovo; from Gledachevo, Stara Zagora region, bones from a man and a child were retrieved.
- 18 The skeleton of a two-year-old child, missing the pelvis and the lower extremities, was found at Malko Tranovo; adult male bone fragments and the lower extremities of a child are known from Gledachevo; the skeleton of a man with no legs was discovered at Debelt; severed arms were found at Yabalkovo.
- 19 At Gledachevo, there was found a skeleton of a girl buried alive face down, while a man with a blade in his chest is known from Durankulak, Dobrich region; see Tonkova 2009, 503–522, with the cited literature.
- 20 Tonkova 2009, 503–522; Nekhrizov and Tzvetkova 2012, 182–183. Similar examples come also from Romania, where, in Early Iron Age “household” pits (Babadag III phase), full and partial skeletons have been found. There is an ongoing discussion whether these pits represent normal funerary practice or human sacrifice; see Irimia 2003, 251–268.
- 21 It is assumed that some Thracian dead were buried by leaving corpses in the open (Sîrbu 1997, 199–200) or depositing them in a temporary grave until decay was complete, after which the human remains were discarded or transported to a permanent grave or elsewhere (Georgieva 2003, 316–

- 22 In recent years, pit complexes are among the most carefully studied archaeological sites in ancient Thrace. The large number of recent discoveries has prompted several discussions dedicated to their interpretation from new perspectives: see “Problems of Thracian Archaeology, the Record of the Round Table Discussion,” in Maritsa-Iztok. Archaeological Research, edited by Ivan Panayotov, Boris Borisov, and Rumyana Georgieva, vol. 5, 238–241. Radnevo: Archaeological Museum “Maritsa-Iztok” and Archaeological Expedition “Maritsa-Iztok”; Popov 2007, 35; Baralis 2008, 148.
- 23 According to V. Sîrbu, pits with remains of human and animal burials, cult figurines, deposits of tools, arms, trinkets, intact vessels, coins, and hearth remains should be considered as ritual in function (Sîrbu and Florea 2000, 89–90).

Chapter 12

Tomb Architecture

Daniela Stoyanova

12.1 Introduction

The ancient Thracians practiced both inhumation and cremation in the posthumous care of the dead. The remains were deposited in various burial structures that ranged from simple pits dug into the ground to various built graves and clay or stone sarcophagi, including sophisticated monumental chamber tombs, which are found buried beneath a mound. Although at present non-tumular cemeteries are scarce, this likely reflects the priorities of modern excavators rather than the unpopularity of the practice in antiquity. The central focus of this chapter will be the architecture of the monumental chamber tombs, which are the largest and most sophisticated burial constructions, designed for one or more individuals, and probably their close kin. It is difficult to define the monumental Thracian tomb in a manner that includes the multiple aspects and impressive diversity of the plans, shapes, roofing, building material, construction techniques, façades, and both interior and exterior decoration attested in the more than 200 monuments studied to date. In the most general terms, such a definition might read: a built chamber tomb, erected on the local terrain and buried under a mound, utilizing various roof styles, including flat roofs, pitched roofs, corbel vaults or domes, and barrel vaults. This chapter will also discuss tombs that share the same plan as the monumental tombs buried beneath tumuli, but have been cut into the ground. The geographical distribution of the monumental tombs is limited primarily to northeastern Thrace and southern Thrace.

Monumental chamber tombs are rare before the middle of the fourth century.¹ The earliest such tomb currently known is found at Ruzhitsa (Elhovo municipality) and dated to the first half of the fifth century (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming). It is followed by tombs at Ruets, Razgrad region (late fifth century), and Eriklice, Kırklareli region, Turkey (ca. 350). The true flourishing of Thracian tomb architecture is reached between the middle of the fourth and the middle of the third centuries, after which there is incidental reuse of older tombs, as at Maglizh and Sarafova Mound, and the occasional construction of new monumental tombs.² The maintenance of these architectural traditions can be traced in some tombs from the Roman period near Malko Tarnovo in the Strandzha mountains of southeastern Bulgaria (Delev 1985; Rousseva 2000, 85–108; Agre 2005, 106–109) as well as the area of Bizye (Mansel 1939, 155–172).

The reasons for the emergence and diffusion of Thracian monumental tombs during this period are to be sought in common tendencies in the development of tomb architecture in the eastern Mediterranean; this process was also assisted by the incorporation of some Thracian territory within the dynamic history of the region as a result of the eastward expansion of the Macedonian state and the role that Thracian elites played in these events.

Different factors influenced the choice of overall plan and individual room shapes, the degree of articulation between different spaces within the tomb complex, the use of painted decoration, and the roofing. There are instances of both isolated monuments, associated with small local centers or key strategic points, and larger groups of built tombs, associated with the great political centers in Thrace, such as: the Getic capital Helis near Sveshtari in northeastern Thrace; Seuthopolis, near Kazanlak; the region of the Panagyurska Sredna Gora Mountains between Strelcha, Starosel, and Rozovets; and the dynastic center in the Chirpan uplands (as marked by the tomb of Bratya Daskalovi: Tonkova and Ivanov 2011, 10–17). The most popular types were the domed and the barrel-vaulted tombs; the former had a long history before its adoption in Thrace, while the arrival of the latter follows upon its conception and development in Macedonia, the popularity of which in Macedonia influenced Thracian practice during Lysimachus' time (cf. Valeva 2013, 52, 57–58). These two types of tomb were also best able to withstand the pressure of tons of earth mounded upon them.

Detailed studies of Thracian tombs began in the 1930s and 1940s with the publication of the formidable complex from the Mal-tepe tumulus, near Mezek, and of the evidence from other tombs in the Mezek (Filov 1937; Stoyanov 2005; Theodossiev and Stoyanova 2010) and Kırklareli areas (Mansel 1943; Onurkan 1988; Theodossiev 2011). In 1970s and 1980s, a spate of new evidence from recent excavations fueled broader synthesizing approaches to the study of tomb architecture (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1979, 63–76). Key questions posed in those studies concerned the origin of both the Thracian domed tombs and their plans. Of particular value is the discovery of the royal tomb with Caryatids from Sveshtari (Fol et al. 1986) (Figures 12.1–12.2; also Figures 13.2–13.3). The 1990s and 2000s brought to light impressive examples of tomb architecture from the Kazanlak valley (Kitov 2005a) and the Panagyurishte Sredna Gora Mountains (Kitov 2003a; 2003b), among other locations, thus expanding considerably our knowledge of all aspects of funerary architecture. This is reflected by the publications of individual monuments, such as the tombs: at Alexandrovo (Haskovo municipality) (Kitov 2009); in Ostrusha mound (Shipka municipality) (Valeva 2005a); and at Gagovo (Popovo municipality) (Rusev and Stoyanova 2012). Several studies from this period well summarize these new discoveries (Valeva 1994; Archibald 1998, 283–303; Rousseva 2002; Theodossiev 2004, 2007a, 2007b; Stoyanova 2007a, 2007b).

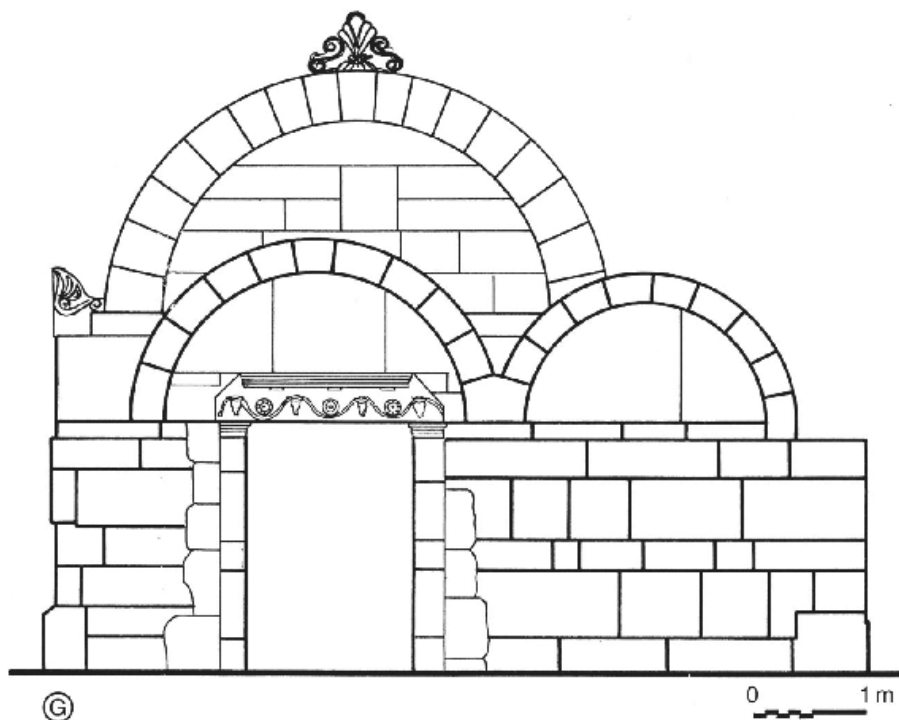


Figure 12.1 The façade of the Tomb with Caryatids at Sveshtari. Drawing by Daniela Stoyanova based on a drawing by Stefan Goshev.

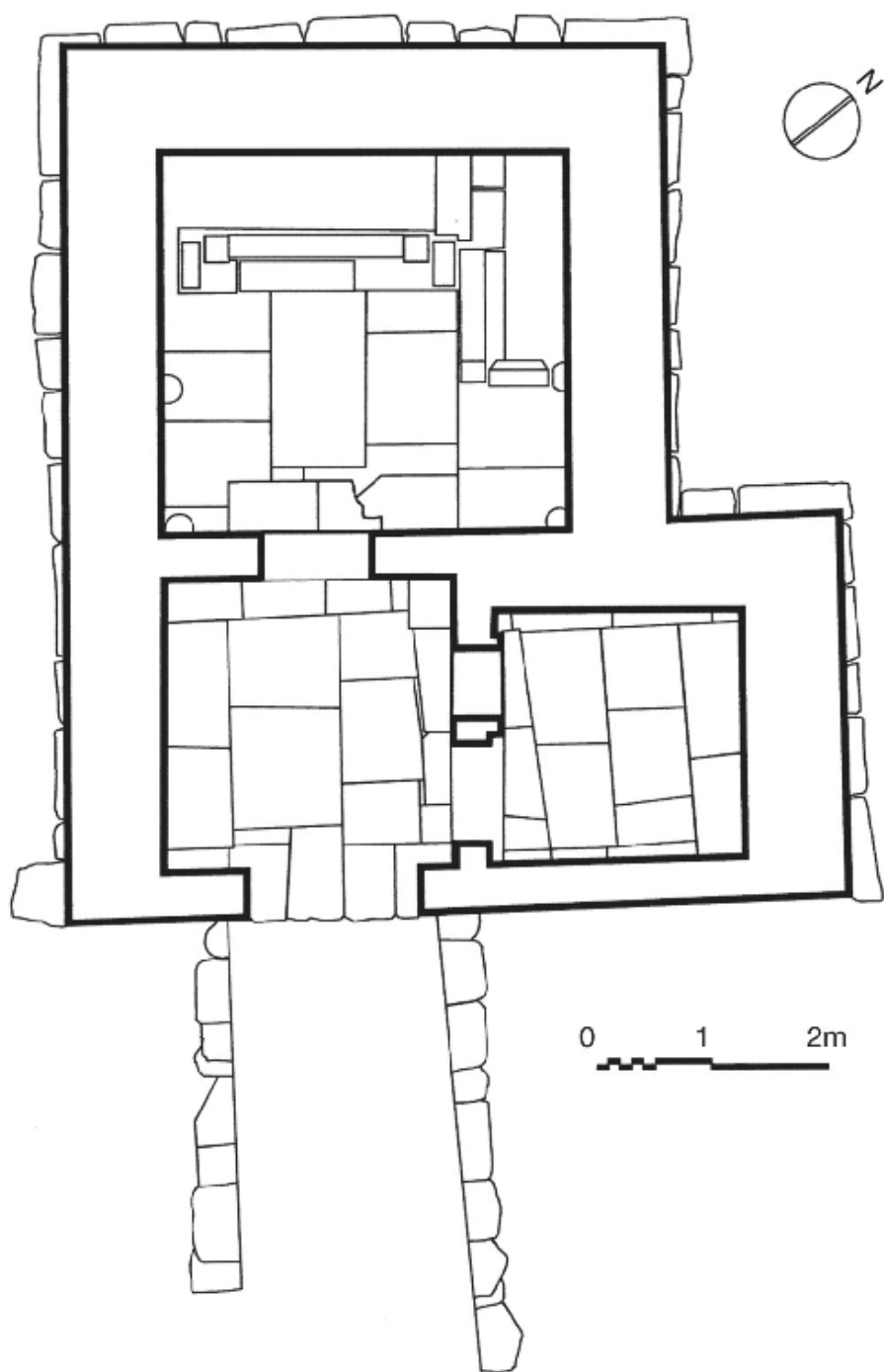


Figure 12.2 Ground plan of the Tomb with Caryatids at Sveshtari. Drawing by Daniela Stoyanova based on a drawing by Stefan Goshev.

12.2 Problems of Chronology

The exact dating of the Thracian tombs is hindered by several key factors. First, a large portion of the monuments were looted already in antiquity or more recently, and so very few complexes preserve diagnostic artifacts delivering a reliable absolute date. Hence, the second factor: in light of the positive evidence for reuse of the most representative monuments, the preserved inventory might date some of the use-phases or periods of operation, but not the construction date or end of the tomb's use-life. Only minute analysis of the evidence gives a well-founded date: a good example is the use of amphora stamps to establish a mid-fourth-century date for the original burial in the Slavchova mogila tomb near the village of Rozovo in the Kazanlak district (Tzochetov 2009, 58, fig. 2). Third, the incomplete and unsatisfactory publications of the excavated monuments have rendered impossible the creation of a reliable database of the elements borrowed from Greek architectural orders and used in some Thracian tombs. Such a database is essential and could help to establish a relative chronology within this group of monuments and thus narrow the range of possible construction dates for individual tombs. The fascinating potential of such an approach is illustrated by the analyses of the tomb with Caryatids in Sveshtari, the exact construction date of which, at the end of the first or beginning of the second quarter of the third century, was determined by identifying well-dated Greek order elements in its architecture (Chichikova 1988; Valeva 1993; Stoyanova 2008a; Chichikova 2012).

A final complication is that in Thrace the graves of even the most prominent elite either were not marked by identifying inscriptions or such information was inscribed on material that has now perished. At present the only exception to this rule is provided by the tomb from Smyadovo, where the façade's architrave is inscribed "Gonimasedze, wife of Seuthes" and may identify the deceased (Rabadjiev forthcoming; for an alternate reading of the inscription, see [Chapter 17](#) in this volume). One must nevertheless ask how plausible the association of certain monuments with specific historical figures can be. The tomb with Caryatids at Sveshtari, for example, has been linked to the most prominent Getic king, Dromichaetes (Stoyanov 1998). Golyama Kosmatka tomb near the modern town of Shipka has been identified as the last resting place of Seuthes III, founder of Seuthopolis, based on the discovery of a bronze male head at the opening of the tomb's dromos similar in profile to the portrait depicted on the coinage of Seuthes III, and assumed to represent the king; additional finds from inside the tomb are inscribed with the name Seuthes (Kitov 2005a, 68 and 2005b, 41; Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming; Nankov 2011). Such an identification is called into question by the construction phases of the monument, the presence of artifacts within the tomb that considerably postdate the likely date of Seuthes III's death, and the wealth of other representative monuments in the area in which the king could have been buried (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming; cf. Saladino 2012–2013).

12.3 The Tumulus and Access to the Tomb

Thracian tombs, as a rule, are built on the ancient terrain³ and are covered by a substantial embankment of soil, sometimes layered or mixed with crushed stone. Sections of excavated tumuli reveal the consecutive layers of the mound. The krepis at the base of the mound is not a typical element of a Thracian tumulus. There are, nevertheless, striking examples of such architecture. At Mal-tepe, excavators documented a massive krepis 5 m thick at the base of a mound measuring 90 m in diameter. Regrettably, this remarkable structure is not visible today (Filov 1937, 2, 7, figs. 3–4; Stoyanov 2005, 123–126, fig. 2). The recently explored Chetinyova mogila near Starosel ([Figure 12.3](#)), 80 m in diameter, preserves a krepis standing to a height of 3.5 m, which, in the opinion of the excavator, may once have stood 5 m high (Kitov 2003a, 9, figs. 1–2, 10).

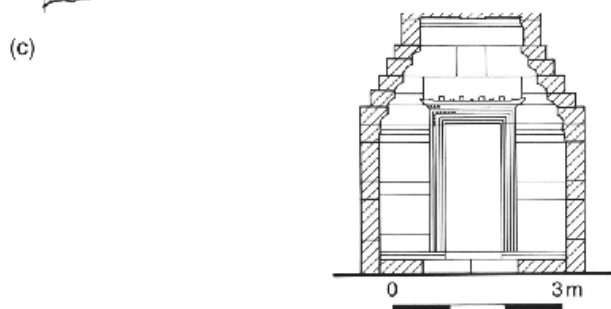
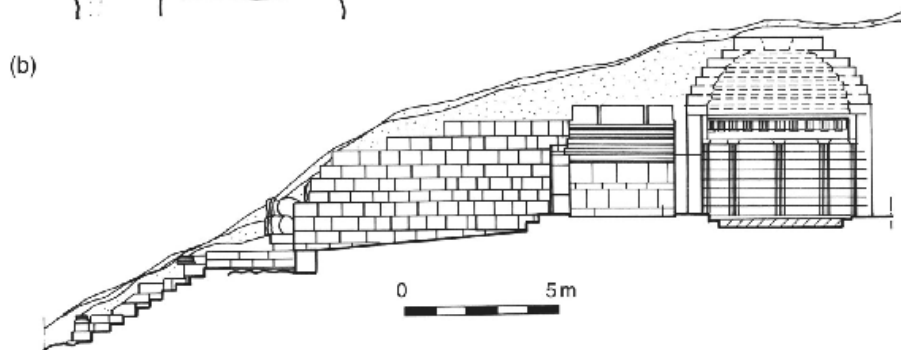
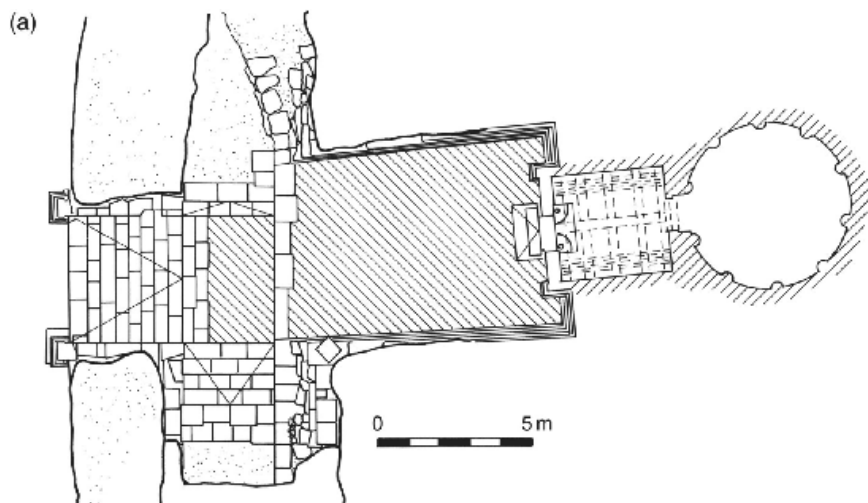


Figure 12.3 The tomb in Chetinyova mound at Starosel: (a) ground plan; (b) cross-section along the long axis; (c) transverse cross-section of the antechamber with view of the Ionic doorframe of the burial chamber. Drawings by Daniela Stoyanova based on a drawing by Maya and Boyko Buzhashki.

Tumuli normally house a single tomb. Very few examples of two or more burial structures in one mound are known. At Zhaba mogila near Strelcha, one tomb is located near the southwestern edge of the mound, another near the northwestern edge (Kitov 1979, 4–5, 12–13). Three tombs are located in Mogilanska mogila near Vratsa (Torbov 2005, 28–39, map I, figs. 5–6) and there are two tombs in the Branichevo mound (Shumen district) (Dremsizova

1958, 453, fig. 10). While the mounding of a tumulus was usually contemporary with tomb construction, there are also examples of structures built in previously prepared tumuli. Sometimes, when the original plan of a tomb was later enlarged, the tumulus too was enlarged, as appears to have been the case in the Maglizh tomb (Getow 1988, 16). Quite often publications fail to provide the exact location of the tomb within the mound; on the basis of available data, preferred locations for the tomb are the center of the embankment or closer to its eastern or southern edge, less often near its western edge. There is no consistent pattern of orientation of the Thracian tombs with regard to road systems or other circumstances (cf. Miller 1993, 7). The typical tumulus is conical or semi-spherical, but quite often the original form has been altered by later interventions. Both the diameter and height of the tumuli covering monumental tombs vary. The biggest mounds can reach a height of 20 m and extend 70–90 m in diameter. It should be stressed, however, that tumulus size does not necessarily indicate the presence of a monumental structure. A number of large burial mounds without tomb are known, while at the same time there are very modest mounds sheltering extremely impressive architectural complexes. An example of the latter is the recently discovered tomb from Gagovo, northeastern Thrace, buried under a tumulus measuring 5 m in height and 60 m in diameter (Rusev and Stoyanova 2012, 43, figs. 3–4, 6). It is nevertheless clear that the most evocative Thracian tombs were associated with colossal embankments, as in the case of the tomb in the Mal-tepe mound near Mezek and Zhaba mogila near Strelcha, among others.

In addition, the placement of tombs within tumuli likely affected accessibility, with tombs near the center of a mound requiring a longer dromos than those placed near the edge. The dromoi are executed in: ashlar masonry, like the Mal-tepe (Filov 1937, 10, figs. 5, 6) and Alexandrovo tombs (Kitov 2009, 13, figs. 8–9); or roughly-hewn stone masonry, as in the Golyama Kosmatka and Helvetia tombs near Shipka (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming), among others; or mud brick, like the tomb from Gagovo (Rusev and Stoyanova 2012, 59–61, figs. 9, 64–65). The dromos roofing might be flat and built of stone slabs, as in the tomb from Alexandrovo (Kitov 2009, 13, fig. 4), or corbeled, as in the Mal-tepe tomb (Filov 1937, 10, figs. 6–7). Dromos roofs might also be constructed of wood, as in the Maglizh (Getow 1988, 12–13) and Golyama Kosmatka tombs (Kitov 2005a, 70), and occasionally combined with pan and cover tiles, as in the tomb from the Griffin mound (Kitov 2003c, 307, figs. 5–6). Dromoi could also be simply left unroofed, as in the Helvetia tomb (Kitov 2008, 112–113, fig. 147). There are documented examples of later modifications to dromos plans, including: extension, as in the Maglizh tomb (Getow 1988, 11–13, fig. 3); narrowing, as in the tomb under the Griffin mound (Kitov 2003c, 307); or addition of new rooms at its entrance, as in the Mal-tepe tomb (Stoyanov 2005, 125, fig. 2), or laterally along the course of the dromos, as in the Maglizh tomb (Getow 1988, 11, fig. 3). Especially

interesting is the case of the Golyama Kosmatka and Gagovo tombs. In its original plan, the Golyama Kosmatka tomb lacked a built dromos, featuring a monumental façade and entrance to the antechamber instead. At a later stage the original façade received a dromos culminating in a second monumental façade (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming) (Figure 12.4). In its first construction phase, the Gagovo tomb was approached through an open, unroofed area in front of a façade, framed by two mud brick, lateral walls (Figure 12.5a). In the second construction phase the open area was blocked up by a solid mud brick structure within which a dromos was fashioned (Figure 12.5b). The face of the mud brick structure was modeled as a smooth façade wall (Rusev and Stoyanova 2012, 43–62, figs. 8–9, 65) (Figure 12.6). It is also possible that some dromoi were executed in perishable materials like mud brick or consisted of rough, unbuilt passages into the embankment that could be backfilled with various materials and opened on demand. Macedonian tombs offer support for this hypothesis (Miller 1993, 5–6). The floor of the dromoi in Thracian tombs was flat or slightly sloping, sometimes with steps, as in the dromos of the Naip tomb (Delemen 2004, fig. 16: 2006, 253, figs. 2, 4). The flooring might be of stone slabs, dirt mixed with rubble, or beaten earth.

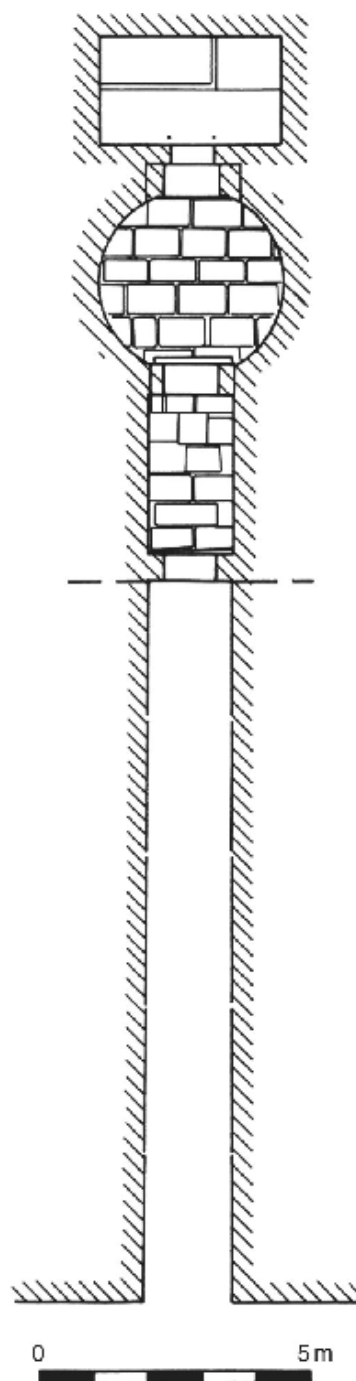


Figure 12.4 Ground plan of the tomb in Golyama Kosmatka mound. Drawing by Daniela Stoyanova based on a drawing by Maya and Boyko Buzhashki.

It is likely that, when tombs were located close to the edge of the tumulus, the space in front of them was left open, at least for a time, and that either plain,

massive façades, as in the case of the Golyama Arsenalka tomb (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming) were installed, or such open space was formally articulated by the construction of walls perpendicular to the tomb, built with stone masonry or mud brick. The Shushmanets tomb, near the town of Shipka (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming) has such an open space defined by stone walls, while in the Gagovo tomb this space is delineated by mud brick walls (Rusev and Stoyanova 2012, 48–49, figs. 8, 24, 26–29). Some open spaces were left unroofed, while others had stone or tile roofing. Of special interest are the examples of open spaces with two columns, which resemble a temple with columns in antis, as in the Roshava tomb, near Starosel (Rousseva 2002, 110–111), and the Ploskata tomb near Shipka (Kitov 2008, 240–241, fig. 409). The most intriguing case is offered by Chetinyova tomb in Starosel, where access is granted first through a large staircase, which commences from the southern edge of the tumulus base and was possibly conceived of as a monumental propylon, and then through an unroofed open space, at the back of which is the façade of the antechamber, featuring an Ionic doorframe (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming; cf. Valeva 2013, 11–12) (Figures 12.3 and 12.7). The final phase of use of the Horizont tomb, near Starosel, presents architecture unusual in the corpus of Thracian tombs: a broad open space, surrounded on three sides by a colonnade (Dimitrova 2007).

For whatever reason, at a certain moment the tumulus mound was extended to cover the dromos. A dense seal of ashlar masonry is documented at the entrance to the interior of some tombs, such as the tomb with Caryatids at Sveshtari and Mal-tepe tomb near Mezek, among others (Fol et al. 1986, 26, fig. 33; Filov 1937, 1–12, figs. 7–9). Research on similar sealing walls in Macedonia indicates that this act was not necessarily associated with final closing of the tomb, but with limiting access until the next scheduled use (Miller 1993, 9 n. 44). Such reuse, for example, was also anticipated by the special adjustment of the mechanism for closing the dromos entrance in the Mal-tepe tomb (Rabadjiev 1995, n. 106).

12.4 Façade

The façades of Thracian tombs are quite diverse. Presenting them briefly is a challenge exceeded only by the attempt to trace the origin of each of the specific designs. In contrast with the heated discussion concerning the prototypes of Macedonian tomb façades (Miller 1993, 11; Huguenot 2008, 42), the topic is practically untouched in the case of their Thracian counterparts (but see, e.g., Stoyanov 1990; Chichikova 2012, 23–26; Valeva 2013).

The simplest façades consist of plain walls with a doorframe, as in the first stage of the Golyama Kosmatka tomb. More elaborate solutions employ

elements of the Greek architectural orders. In contrast to their Macedonian counterparts, the Thracian tombs have yet to deliver an example of a façade completely conforming to a Greek architectural order and representing all elements, from the columns and architrave to the pediment. The entrance in the façade commonly features an Ionic or Doric doorframe; an example of the former is the Golyama Arsenalka tomb (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming), while the latter is represented by the tomb from Mound 13 at Sveshtari (Stoyanova 2007b, fig. 9). In more elaborate designs, the doorframes can be combined with: elements of the entablature, as in the second façade of the Golyama Kosmatka tomb; with columns, engaged or free-standing, together with entablature elements, as in the Smyadovo tomb and the Roshava tomb, near Starosel; with column and pediment, as in the Shushmanets tomb; or with a complete entablature, with or without pediment, as in the Gagovo tomb and the sarcophagus-like burial chamber from Ostrusha mound.

There are several basic variants of pediment-type façades: façades crowned by an architrave beam, as at Eriklice tomb near Kırklareli; façades with an architrave beam, the top of which imitates a low pediment with central and corner acroteria, as in the Filipovo tomb in Plovdiv; façades with a pediment and modeled corner acroteria, as in the Shushmanets tomb and Chetinyova tomb, among others. Free-standing corner and central acroteria are documented at the Ostrusha tomb and Zhaba tomb, near Strelcha; there are also corner and central acroteria crowning the vault of the Caryatids tomb at Sveshtari (Theodossiev and Stoyanova 2010, 192–193). The latter example reveals an absolutely unrestricted approach in the treatment of the pediment and the location of the associated acroteria (Chichikova 2012, 23–24, figs. 30–32). A liberal application of elements of Greek architectural orders characterizes the middle and second half of the fourth century, resulting in, for example, the pediments with central and corner acroteria included as part of the decoration on Ionic doorframes, as in the Shushmanets tomb and the tomb at Smyadovo (Stoyanova 2005, 662–663), or a pediment with central and corner acroteria modeled in low relief, as in the Griffin tomb near Shipka (Kitov 2003c, 308, figs. 4–5; Stoyanova 2005, 663–664). The last example illustrates a façade decoration, limited only to the Ionic doorframe. Due to the poor condition of the tombs at Kurt-kale and Gagovo, it is unclear if the acroteria found there were part of the entablature or the pediment (Theodossiev and Stoyanova 2010, 180, figs. 4–8; Rusev and Stoyanova 2012, 70–71, fig. 87). In contrast to the tombs from Macedonia, the Greek order elements presented upon the tomb façades in Thrace are rendered in relief, not in stucco. Individual elements, like cymation or astragalus, are painted, as, for example, on the anta capitals from the entrance in the façade of the Caryatids tomb at Sveshtari or the meander from the entrance in the façade of the Chetinyova tomb (Figure 12.7). The tomb in the northwestern periphery of the Zhaba mound is the only Thracian example to date that presents sculptures on

the façade: panthers⁴ likely flanked the entrance. Parallels for this design should be sought in funerary architecture from Asia Minor (Stoyanova 2005, 659–660).

Some Thracian tomb façades mask the roofing structure of the subsequent compartment, while others, as in the case of vaulted and corbeled tombs, reveal the elements of the construction. As the evidence reviewed above illustrates, the monumental façades of Thracian tombs were influenced by the use of elements of Greek architectural orders in the burial architecture of neighboring peoples, the earliest example of which is the Nereid monument in Xanthus. Once implemented, the trait was quickly picked up in regions adjacent to mainland and east Greece, like Caria, Lycia, and Lydia. The maintenance of the tradition is later manifested in the Thracian and Macedonian tombs, of course tailored to local taste. As in the case of Macedonian tombs (Miller 1993, 11), architects of Thracian tombs had the freedom to reduce, expand, combine, add, or omit architectural details from the façade.

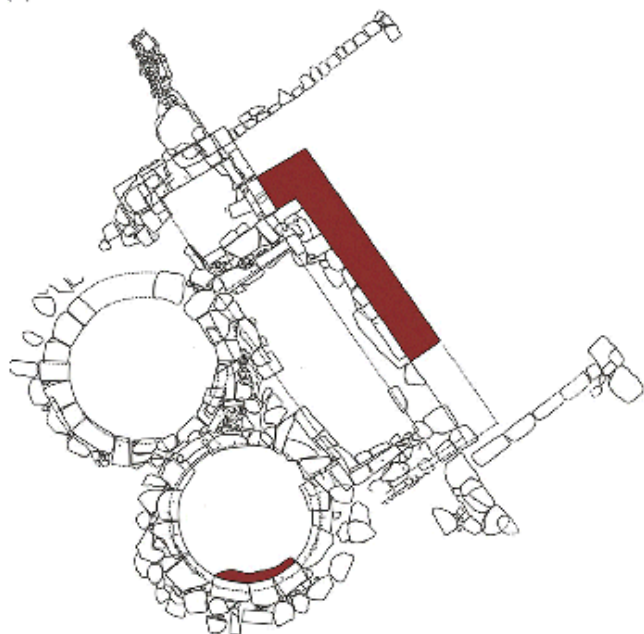
12.5 Building Materials and Construction Techniques

Thracian tombs utilized ashlar masonry, usually pseudo-isodomic in style, extremely rarely isodomic, as well as roughly hewn stone. Both igneous (e.g., granite, rhyolite, syonite) and sedimentary rocks (e.g., volcanic tuff, sandstone, limestone) were suitable for ashlar masonry; these were procured locally or from more distant sources. In the case of ashlar masonry, the visible face can be rusticated or highly finished and display drafted margins. The other sides have anathyrosis. The ashlars are usually slightly trapezoidal in form, with the exposed front wider than the back. Walls are usually one to two blocks thick. In the instances of double row walls, the blocks which were never intended to be seen were left rough. Exceptions to this rule are presented by the tomb with Caryatids at Sveshtari and the Malko Belovo tomb, where ashlars are well dressed on both faces of the wall, though the manner of dressing differs for the external and interior ashlars. The most commonly employed technique is pseudo-isodomic, with alternating narrow and wide rows, with or without coincidence of joints between blocks. A variant of this pattern, with narrow rows of ashlars transecting the entire width of the wall and wide rows made up of two blocks, one for the inner face and one for the outer, is observed in the tombs from mound no. 1 in the Manyov Dol locality, Chetinyova mogila in Starosel, and at Parvomay near Plovdiv, among others. The quality of the stone, its dressing, and the masonry employed rendered plaster redundant. In some cases where plaster is preserved, however, as, for example, in the Alexandrovo tomb, among others, it most likely indicates secondary modification of the original interior design.

Metal clamps fit in lead were used in some walls and roofs. In the Mal-tepe tomb, both metal clamps and oak dowels are documented (Filov 1937, 8–9). We have no evidence supporting the use of lime mortar in ashlar masonry. Rubble masonry, which was generally preferred to ashlar masonry in the construction of dromoi and open spaces, made use of clay as bonding agent; such masonry was also used to cover the exterior surface of the tomb, functioning as a protective layer between the outside of the tomb and the earth of the mound.

Brick was also utilized in tomb construction in the Kazanlak valley (Chichikova 1957; Chichikova 2007; Stoyanova 2011, 341–343 n. 2). Rectangular compartments were built with rectangular bricks, while wedge-shaped bricks were used in domed chambers. The bricks are set in lime or clay mortar and brick walls are usually plastered over. Mud brick was also rarely used in tomb constructions, as, for example, in the tombs at Ruzhitsa and Gagovo ([Figures 12.5–12.6](#)) (Stoyanova and Popov 2008, 344; Rusev and Stoyanova 2012, 48–49, 59–60, 63, figs. 9, 24, 27–29, 64–68).

(a)



(b)

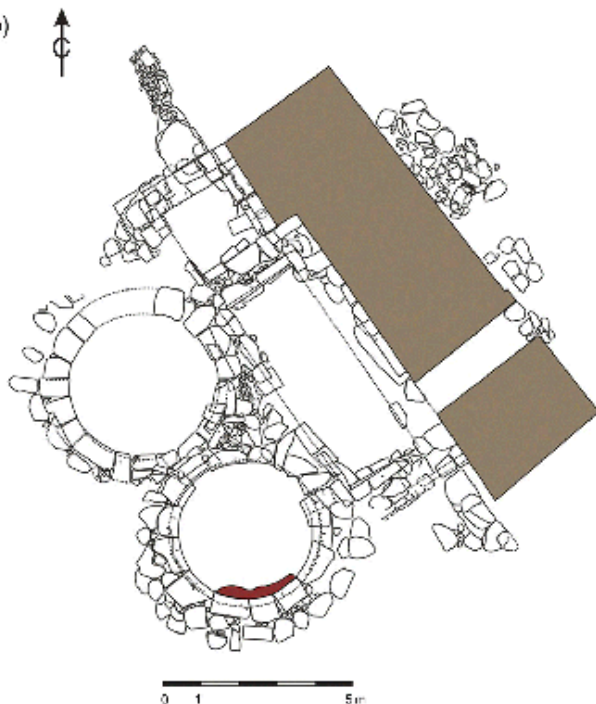


Figure 12.5 The Gagovo tomb: (a) ground plan of the tomb, first building phase; (b) ground plan of the tomb, second building phase. Drawings by Daniela Stoyanova and Nikola Rusev.



Figure 12.6 Mud brick façade of Gagovo tomb, second building phase.

Photo by Nikola Russev.



Figure 12.7 Doorjamb of the Ionic frame of the entrance to the antechamber of the tomb in Chetinyova mound in Starosel.

Photo by Kalin Dimitrov.

12.6 Layouts and Entrances

Thracian tombs typically consist of: a burial chamber, the dimensions and plan of which are widely variable; one or more antechambers; an open area; and, rarely, one or more lateral chambers (cf. Valeva 2013, 7–13). Burial chambers of differing plan (e.g., quadrangular, circular) and size are attested. Their volume is contingent on the roof design (see below). The burial chamber is preceded by one or more antechambers, normally smaller than the burial chamber; round burial chambers are preceded by antechambers of quadrangular plan. The plan of the burial chamber, quadrangular or circular, has been selected as the primary criterion in the classification of Thracian tombs. Additional classification takes into account the number of rooms (e.g., single or multiple chambers, with or without further quarters like dromoi: Rousseva 2000, 50–51, T. 1; Rousseva 2002, 29–68). A more detailed variation on this typology accounts also for roofing style and the function of the rooms leading to the burial chamber (Valeva 2013).

Doorframes in Thracian tombs are articulated variously. A monolithic threshold, jambs, and an undecorated lintel are typical, as, for example, in the two antechambers of Golyama Kosmatka tomb (Kitov 2005a, figs. 105, 107, 112) and the Mal-tepe tomb (Filov 1937, 19, 21, figs. 14, 17–19). The most representative doorframes are in the Doric or Ionic order. The Doric doorframes are assigned into three groups. The first group includes doorframes with a threshold, monolithic jambs, and lintel, modeled with a thin strip near the edge. Quite often the strip is further accentuated with red paint. Such doorframes are preserved in the tomb with Caryatids and mound 13 at Sveshtari and in the Borovo tomb (Stoyanova 2007a, 539, pl. Va, figs. 1–3). The second group is comprised of doorframes of built or monolithic antae, crowned by Ionic anta capitals. On top of them sits a lintel comprised of a Doric architrave and geison. Such features are preserved in the tombs in mounds nos. 12 and 13 at Sveshtari, among others (Stoyanova 2007a, 539, pl. Va, figs. 4–5; Valeva 2006). The third group receives the least sophisticated treatment: the doorframe is a simple void in the ashlar wall, topped by a lintel, usually undecorated. Such doorframes are present in several tombs near Odessos, Callatis, and Kırklareli (Stoyanova 2007a, 539–540, pl. Va, fig. 6). All three groups of Doric doorframes have good parallels in Macedonian tomb architecture (Stoyanova 2007a, 535–538, pl. IVa–b, figs. 1–6, 8).

In contrast to Macedonia, the Ionic doorframe is very widely distributed in Thrace. The tradition of adopting Ionic doorframes in burial monuments originates in the Nereid monument from Xanthus, and is continued at numerous Lycian and Carian sites. Thus, Asia Minor emerges as a central influence on the use of Ionic doorframes in Thracian tombs. Representative monuments of mainland and Aegean Greece, such as the tholos at Epidauros, are a second influence (Stoyanova 2005, 666). The Ionic doorframes known to date are classified into six groups (Stoyanova 2005, 656–665, figs. 1–21). The first group includes doorframes with two or three fasciae, astragalus, cyma

profile, and a crowning fascia. Such doorframes feature in the two tombs in Zhaba mound in Strelcha, among others. The tomb near the southeastern edge of Zhaba mound features a sculpted Lesbian cyma, the profile of which parallels exactly the door of the tholos at Epidaurus, while the tomb near the mound's northwestern edge preserves a painted Lesbian cyma. The second group includes doorframes with undecorated fasciae, including those with two fasciae, as in the Golyama Arsenalka tomb and the Kurt-kale tomb near Mezek, among others, or three, as in the Ruets tomb and the Roshava tomb, among others. The doorframes in the third group feature a pediment in addition to the three fasciae, as in Shushmanets tomb and the tomb near Smyadovo. Such an element is not attested in Archaic or Classical Ionic doorframes. This design, in fact, renders a Greek temple façade in miniature. The fourth group resembles a temple with columns in antis and includes the doorframe from the Griffin tomb. The naiskos within Sveshtari tomb belongs to the fifth group (Chichikova 2012, 57–63, figs. 76–88), while the final, sixth group includes the entrance to the Naip tomb, whose doorframe features antae topped by Attic-Ionic anta capitals and a denticulated lintel (Delemen 2004, 10–12, figs. 14–15). The six categories of doorframes discussed above each share a common trait: they all have a trapezoidal cross-section and are broader at the threshold than at the lintel.

Doorframes echoing the shape of a corbel vault are a special group. Such a design is employed at the entrance to the antechamber of the Popova mound tomb, near Oryahovitsa (Kitov 2005a, 40, fig. 48), and at the entrance to the antechamber of the Kazanlak tomb (Vasileva 2005, figs. 69–70), among others.

The entrances of the Thracian tombs were closed through single- or double-leaf doors, typically made of stone, more rarely of wood or metal. The leaves are attached either through beds for the pivot shaft specially cut into the threshold or floor below and the lintel, or through metal rings attached to the wall. At the tombs in mounds 12 and 13 at Sveshtari and the Borovo tombs, the doors were operated differently: by sliding in grooves cut into the threshold and the lintel. Sliding doors are also known from Lycia (Stoyanova 2002, 536, 542). Certain tombs had a second door closing off the burial chamber, as in the Golyama Arsenalka tomb.

Wooden doors were used in the tombs at Ruzhitsa, Kazanlak, and Dolno Izvorovo (Parvin and Stoyanova forthcoming; Nekhrizov and Parvin 2011, 46–49). The only metal door known to date, bronze, is found in the Mal-tepe tomb (Filov 1937, 21–22, figs. 18–22). Stone doors are modeled on those in wood used in both temple and funerary architecture. The known types are quite diverse and may be smooth or coffered. At least three of the Gagovo tomb entrances had smooth leaves (Rusev and Stoyanova 2012, 65–67, figs. 80–81). In contrast with the leaves in tombs from Macedonia, inscribed with horizontal stripes and one vertical, and embossed with imitations of nail

heads, the doors in Thrace feature two additional vertical stripes, which frame two or four coffers on each leaf. This type of stone door is widely attested in Asia Minor since the Archaic period. Two major groups are recognized in Thrace: leaves with two or four coffers rendered in relief, without further decoration on the frames, as in the Golyama Arsenalka and Helvetia tombs, among others, some of which may have supplementary coloring; and leaves with coffers modeled in relief, with additional decoration of the coffer frames, like embossed hemispheres or shields, imitating nail heads, as in the tombs at Parvenets and in mound 1 at Manyov dol near Starosel, among others (Stoyanova 2002). On the other hand, the marble leaves from Bulair, Naip, and Stavroupolis are identical to those known in Macedonia and reflect the influence of Macedonian funerary architecture (Stoyanova 2002).

The only marble door in an inland Thracian tomb known to date is the double-leaf door in Golyama Kosmatka tomb. Each leaf contains two coffers that have been joined together by a common frame with painted Lesbian cymation. The upper coffer on each leaf is decorated with a shield; one contains the head of Helios in relief, while the other displays a head of Medusa, also in relief. The Golyama Kosmatka door was probably produced by a workshop in a city on the coast of Aegean Thrace.

12.7 Roofing

The roof structures used in Thracian burial monuments make use of both wood and stone. Evocative illustrations of wood roofing are offered by, for example, the Maglizh and Kran tombs, among others. In a few cases, the wooden structure is combined with tiles (Kazarova and Stoyanova 2009, 188–189).

Eleven systems of stone roofing are observed in Thracian monumental tombs (details and terminology: Valeva 2013, 14–16, *et passim*). Types 1–6 are listed here: (1) slab stone roofing, which, though known from the Vrani kon tombs and Prilep tomb, among others, is relatively rare; (2) flat roof of dressed, rectangular or pentagonal slabs, used in dromoi and in burial chambers and antechambers, as in Ruzhitsa and Gabarevo tombs, for example, and in built tombs; (3) a combination of transverse beams and stone slabs, so far known only from the Panicheri tomb, although well represented in Carian tomb architecture (Rusev and Stoyanova 2012, 50 n. 18); (4) pitched roof of stone slabs, as in the dromos of the Golyama Arsenalka tomb and in the burial chambers and antechambers of the tombs at mound no. 4 in Manyov dol, among others; (5) trapezoidal slab roof, as in the Roshava mound tomb near Starosel; and (6) monolithic lids, as in the burial chambers in Ostrusha and Golyama Kosmatka tomb. The remaining five systems require more detailed discussion below: (7) corbel vault; (8) lantern vault; (9) barrel vault; (10) corbel dome; and (11) dome on pendentives.

In Thrace the (7) corbel vault is used to roof rectangular and square spaces, such as dromoi, antechambers, and burial chambers. Examples are numerous, including the Vetren and Mal-tepe tombs, among many others (Stoyanova 2011, 337–338). The corbel vault is produced by offsetting successive courses of ashlar. The face of each course could be different in section, thus producing different overall outlines of the vault in section. Courses with vertical faces in section produce a vault that is stepped, while courses with a curved face yield a gentle curve defined by the offset angle. Courses with faces displaying modeled vertical and curved sections produce a broken, sophisticated profile, as in the Chetinyova tomb, although there the top of the vault had to be truncated because of the great span of the antechamber's width (Stoyanova 2011, 338) ([Figure 12.3](#)). A fourth technique is also known, in which the ashlar of each successive course are cut as segments, resulting in a corbel vault with semi-cylindrical section, as in the Shushmanets and Naip tombs, among others (Stoyanova 2007b, 579–580). A fifth type of corbel vault is represented in Madzharovo tomb no. 1, where the offset is modeled on all four walls of the chamber, resulting in the so-called pyramid vaulted tomb. The distribution of this technology is very limited within Thrace. There is another tomb near Madzharovo, in which the vaulting progresses from three of the chamber walls (Stoyanova 2011, 343).

The so-called (8) lantern vault, encountered in ante- and burial chambers, is used in the Zhaba mound tombs, among others (Theodossiev 2007b, 602–603). The combination of this type of vault with a dome suggests that the lantern vault construction, which developed in Anatolia during the Archaic period, had been adapted to local developments (Stoyanova 2011, 343–345; cf. Ginouvès and Guimier-Sorbets 1994, where different terminology is used).

Tombs with (9) barrel vaults make up a distinct group, represented by approximately 30 tombs spread over several regions: northeastern Thrace, including Odessos, Callatis, Sveshtari, and Borovo; southeastern Thrace, around Kirkklareli; and sporadically in the areas of Kazanlak, Lagina, and Stauroupolis in Aegean Thrace (Stoyanova 2007b). The considerable size of this corpus makes it possible for scholars to understand important details about the evolution of Macedonian-type tombs in Thrace and to remark on peculiar types of wedged vault. There appears to be a direct correlation between the width of the bay that supports the vault, and the location of the tomb on the ancient terrain. Tombs situated on the ground feature considerably more substantial walls. Regarding the correlation between the façade and the structure two basic solutions are identified: in most monuments, the vault construction is visible in the façade, while currently only the Borovo tomb features a pediment masking the structure of the vault.

The vault wedges come in different sizes; their number is not correlated to the chamber width (Stoyanova 2007b, 578; Stoyanova 2011, fig. 18). The tomb with Caryatids at Sveshtari must be considered a variation on the familiar

vault designs of a single vault in the two-chamber tombs or separate vaults in the single-chamber tombs with dromos (Stoyanova 2011, figs. 19–20). The tomb presents us with the most sophisticated structure in terms of construction: the vaults of antechamber and lateral chamber spring from the top of the wall shared by the two chambers and are drawn as a linked chain-construction (Figures 12.1–12.2) (Stoyanova 2007b, 579). Until a monument of older date is identified, we must consider in the tomb with Caryatids an innovation in the history of the barrel vault.

The (10) corbel dome is constructed in diverse ways. One variation, the beehive dome, uses wedge-shaped ashlar or roughly hewn stone and slabs. The most striking members of the former are the Zhaba and Golyama Arsenalka tombs, among many others. Roughly-hewn stones and slabs make up the constructions at Ravnogor, Lyaskovo, and Borovitsa (Stoyanova 2011, 347, Figs. 21–23). A second variant combines beehive and bell-like sections, as seen in the Kazanlak tomb. Analysis of the tomb's murals indicates that this design reflected the requirements of the painted decoration, and specifically the large figural frieze (Vasileva 2005, 125–155). A third variant includes tholos tombs that combine a cylindrical section, at least as tall as the doorframe, and a surmounting dome, which is built of gradually offset wedge ashlar (mound no. 1 in Manyov dol, Chetinyova mound, Eriklice, Karakoc, mound B at Kırklareli, and quite possibly the Malko Belovo and Parvenets tombs) or several circles of wedged ashlar topped by radially arranged trapezoidal ashlar (Shushmanets tomb) (Stoyanova 2011, 349, figs. 25–28). Depending on the profile of the ashlar used in the dome construction, its curve is either smooth or serrated. The Ostrusha mound complex and the Golyama Kosmatka mound tomb (Figure 12.4) indicate that circular chambers are not necessarily burial, while the Gagovo tomb (Figure 12.5) featured two identical round burial chambers.

So far only two tombs are documented from Thrace with a (11) dome upon pendentives: the Brestovitsa tomb, Plovdiv district, and the tomb in Furtunova mound near Maglizh (Stoyanova 2011, 349). The square or rectangular chambers with vertical walls had coarsely fashioned pendentives at a certain height, launching the transition to the dome.

The corbel vault and dome are widely used across southern Thrace, but scarce in northeastern Thrace, where the barrel vault is more popular. The explanation of this distribution is a challenging task. It must first be emphasized that the dome tombs of southern Thrace predate the barrel vault tombs in northeastern Thrace. Such a finding suggests that the political, economic, and cultural situation in southern Thrace was advantageous for an earlier appearance of monumental tombs, at which time domed, circular burial chambers, able to bear the weight of a covering earthen mound, were preferred. A similar favorable moment for northeastern Thrace came when Lysimachus became ruler of this part of Alexander's empire: Macedonian

influence was felt in many ways, including the construction of barrel vault tombs for the elite.

12.8 Interior and Decorative Elements

It is usually the case that Thracian tombs with decorative exterior façades have an undecorated interior of well-laid pseudo-isodomic ashlar blocks, as in the tombs in Zhaba mound, among others. But the Shushmanets, Chetinjova, and Caryatids tombs, for example, preserve evocative façades with an even more striking interior, implementing a true Greek architectural order (Valeva 2005b). Tombs with elaborate interiors utilizing elements of Greek architectural orders, however, do not usually lie behind plain façades; the Kazanlak, Maglizh, and Alexandrovo tombs are exceptional in this regard, for their interior architectural elements were represented in paint (cf. [Chapter 13](#) in this volume). Also unique at present is the stone naiskos in the interior of the Caryatids tomb (Chichikova 2012, 57–63).

Various types of floor are in use in Thracian tombs. While stone slab floors tend to be irregularly arranged, there are also instances of clear circular arrangement of slabs with a pronounced center, as in the burial chamber of the Golyama Arsenalka tomb. At the Alexandrovo tomb, where the painted ornament is associated with a later phase of use, the slab floor too was subsequently plastered over. In those monuments in which murals are part of the original design, floors are built on a bed of rubble, tiles, and lime, on top of which plaster was applied. Other types of flooring include: a compacted and baked in situ clay plaster, as in the Gagovo tomb; or a mosaic of colored river stones rendering simple motifs, as in the tomb in the northwestern periphery of the Zhaba mound. Walls are usually flat, but there are examples of an emphasized toichobate or cornice chiseled with an ovolo or cyma reversa profile, as in the burial chambers of the Filipovo and Parvenets tombs, among others.

In the absence of murals, ceilings are not colored. Currently the only exception to this rule is the coffered ceiling of the sarcophagus-like burial chamber from Ostrusha mound (Valeva 2005a).

12.9 Furniture

Tomb furniture include beds and sarcophagi, urns, stools (diphroi), tables, and benches. Several types of stone beds are distinguished: monolithic, built, composite, either with posts and a horizontal slab or with posts and front and horizontal slabs, and sarcophagi.

Monolithic beds were either plain or with relief decoration on the front legs and mattress, as, for example, in the Mal-tepe and Ostrusha tombs. Built beds might be made from: ashlar blocks, as in Alexandrovo tomb; roughly hewn

stone, as in Sashova tomb; bricks and roughly hewn stone, as in Maglizh tomb, among others; or of rough stone, revetted with slabs, as in Staroselka tomb.

The best of the several examples of a composite bed with posts and mattress is found in the Naip tomb (Delemen 2004, 27–37). More complex composite beds with posts and both front and horizontal slabs were likely inspired by the modeling of the façade plate masking the posts in kline-sarcophagi, where legs and a mattress are modeled in low relief. In some cases, the space framed by the posts and the façade plate is packed with ashlar and split stones, which eliminates the possibility that these beds were used as sarcophagi; good examples are found in the Caryatids tomb at Sveshtari (Chichikova 2012, 53–55, figs. 69–74), among others.

Sarcophagi were built of stone or wood. Stone sarcophagi may be without decoration, as in mound B in Mapite locality of Sozopol, or in the form of a kline, as in the Malko Belovo tomb. The slab lid is flat or gabled. Wooden sarcophagi are so far known only from tombs near Odessos.

Despite their different constructions, the decoration of funerary beds always includes two basic elements: turned legs and mattress. Leg shape, the details chiseled upon them, and the presence of supplementary ornament situated below the mattress are all variable; a splendid example of the last are two stools depicted in low relief on the front of the bed in the Dolno Izvorovo tomb (Figure 12.8). Additionally, in front of the beds a step built, or rendered in relief, could be present. In some instances the upper surface of the bed has pillows, either sculpted in relief or free standing. Though differently constructed, the beds in the Ostrusha, Griffin, and Dolno Izvorovo tombs, among others, are similar in decoration to a group of beds from Kaunos and the mainland Greek cities of Corinth, Eretria, and Dion (Huguenot 2008, pl. 22). The date of the Thracian tombs, from the last third of the fourth to the very beginning of the third century, strongly supports a Lycian influence.



Figure 12.8 The bed in the tomb at Dolno Izvorovo.

Photo by Georgi Nekhrizov.

Urns have only been documented at the Mal-Tepe tomb (Filov 1937, 25–27), where two rectangular, monolithic urns were recovered, each with a shallow cutting into their stone slab lids. Stools are securely documented at three tombs: one from the Caryatids tomb at Sveshtari, in wood (Chichikova 2012, 55–56, fig. 75); a pair from the Naip tomb, in stone (Delemen 2004, 45–49); and a single stone stool from the Ivanski tomb. They are complemented by representations of painted stools in the murals within the Kazanlak and Alexandrovo tombs, and of stools in relief on the bed in the Dolno Izvorovo tomb.

Benches are known from the Kırklareli tomb, mound C. Made in stone, they preserve no indications of further ornamentation. Tables, too, are rarely documented. They are square or rectangular in shape, and are monolithic, as in Golyama Kosmatka tomb, or constructed of several slabs, as in Naip tomb (Delemen 2004, 37–44); brick tables are known from the Popova tomb, near Oryahovitsa. Tables are also represented in murals from the Kazanlak and Alexandrovo tombs.

To date no actual thrones have been found in Thracian tombs. The enthroned figure from the mural in the Alexandrovo tomb is poorly preserved. The enthroned female painted in the Kazanlak tomb frieze demonstrates the use of the throne in the Macedonian funerary monuments. The representations themselves comply with known Ionic schemes for tombstone reliefs

12.10 Conclusion

The new evidence for tomb architecture not only in Thrace, but also in adjacent regions, especially Macedonia, Thessaly, and Asia Minor, offers considerably more numerous possibilities for typological comparisons. One important observation that emerges from such comparisons and analyses concerns the Thracian aristocracy, who should be regarded as motivating the creation and development of local variants of the monumental tomb. The involvement of Thracian elites in the dynamic events in the eastern Mediterranean during the late Classical and early Hellenistic period and their deeper acquaintance with Hellenic and Hellenistic architecture resulted in the appearance of an effusion of imposing tombs, the plans, construction, and decoration of which were inspired by Greek architecture. Detailed studies about the application of Greek order elements in Thracian tombs, along with progress in dating the monuments, have made it possible to discern the exact degree of the Greek impact on the design of the monumental Thracian tombs.

In tapping the pool of available expertise in construction, locals were free to combine and experiment. This is illustrated by some of the most evocative funerary complexes of a comparatively early date. But since the peak of tomb architecture in Thrace is so brief, it remains impossible to establish a clear chronology or to infer influence among monuments within the region. The presence or absence of architectural details cannot contribute to establishing a relative or absolute chronology within the corpus of Thracian tombs.

It should be emphasized that the detailed study of the integral parts of the Thracian tombs suggest the influence of the funerary architecture in Asia Minor, such as, for example, the application of Ionic type door frames, the sliding doors, the shape of the door leaves, some roofings like the lantern type, some types of funerary beds, as well as the relief decoration on the façade of the tomb in the northwestern edge of the Zhaba mogila. At the same time, the influence of the architecture of both continental and Aegean Greece, and of Macedonia, cannot be denied.

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Guide to Further Reading

Andrianou, Dimitra. 2009. *The Furniture and Furnishings of Ancient Greek Houses and Tombs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. This particularly broad study of the furniture in Greek houses and especially in tombs is essential for the study of the furniture in Thracian tombs, which still needs better publication and discussion.

Archibald, Zofia. 1998. *The Odrysian Kingdom of Thrace*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. For the burial rites in Thrace during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age (48–66); for the settlements and their necropoleis from the Classical and Hellenistic Age (135–145); for the Late Iron Age burial rites and the elite burials in the Odrysian kingdom (151–176).

Huguenot, Caroline. 2008. *La Tombe aux Érotes et la Tombe d'Amarnthos. Architecture funéraire et présence macédonienne en Grèce centrale*. Vol. I – Texte. Vol. II – Catalogue et planches. Gollion: Infolio éditions / Ecole Suisse d'archéologie en Grèce. A particularly valuable publication about the Macedonian type of tombs and the furnishing of their interior. See also the review by Julia Valeva in *Gnomon*, 83 (2011): 519–526.

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Stoyanov, Totko. 1997. *Early Iron Age Tumular Necropolis. Sboryanovo I*. Sofia: Svyat. Nauka. This study gives general information about burial rites in Thrace from the end of the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age.

von Mangoldt, Hans. 2012. *Makedonische Grabarchitektur: die Makedonischen Kammergräber und ihre Vorläufer*. Tübingen: Wasmuth. Recent publication on Macedonian tombs, with a short and incomplete overview of the type in Thrace.

Notes

- 1 All dates referring to ancient monuments and events are BCE, unless otherwise noted.
- 2 An example of a tomb built after this date is the Ravnogor tomb (Kitov

1989). According to N. Theodossiev, their construction and function dates between the second half of the second century BCE and the first decades of the first century CE.

- 3 A group of tombs that were dug into the ancient terrain is restricted to northeastern Thrace, from the area of the Getic capital Helis, Borovo, Brestovitsa, and Tutrakan. These are not built, but make use of the hard dense soil, occasionally supplemented by wooden or stone construction (Gergova 2008, 255–258; Gergova, Ivanov, and Katevski 2011). Another group of tombs with features foreign to Thrace are the catacomb tombs near Kalново (Atanasov 1992). Barrel vault tombs from Odessos and Callatis, perhaps meant to receive persons of Macedonian descent, were also subterranean (Stoyanova 2007b, 576). A similar hypothesis offered for the Racheva mound near Maglizh has been proved unfounded, as its subterranean appearance seems more likely to be the result of past erosion that considerably modified the terrain. The Sarafova mound, Slavchova mound tombs (Kitov 2005a, 15–16), the Ploskata and Donkova mounds (Kitov 2008, 240–241), and Padarska mound, all in the Kazanlak valley, as well as the tombs from Panagyurishte, Dermantsi, mound no. 2 at Brestovitsa, and Ruets, all have above-ground constructions.
- 4 As the animals have manes, they were interpreted as lions, but the rendering of the heads and the ears are typical of depictions of panthers (cf. Jenkins 2006, fig. 163).

Chapter 13

The Decoration of Thracian Chamber Tombs

Julia Valeva

13.1 Introduction

Although this chapter is dedicated strictly to the decoration of Thracian tombs, such decoration should be perceived as part of a sacred unit, the elements of which – including tumulus, tomb, structures for commemorative rites, grave goods, and decoration – complement one another. They build a complex, both material and spiritual, that aims, through architectural forms, objects, and effigies, to represent the imaginary passage of the deceased from this world to the next and their glorious existence there. In this sense, our use of the term “decoration” is somewhat inexact and relative: although subject to aesthetic norms and decorative traditions, the paintings and sculptures in the Thracian tombs were primarily a symbolic expression of a spiritual reality. For us moderns, these funerary complexes represent some of the most revealing evidence of the religion, mythology, and eschatology of our predecessors, as well as their personal emotions.

Thracian chamber tombs can be classified into two basic types, according to the plan and shape of the rooms: tombs with a rectangular funerary chamber and additional rooms; and tombs with a circular funerary chamber and additional rooms. The additional rooms are also either rectangular or circular, with roofing similar to that of the funerary chamber (Valeva 2013). The shape of the rooms was fundamental for the design of the interior decoration. Both types of tomb reached their greatest popularity in the early Hellenistic period. Cist tombs had previously been constructed in the second half of the fifth and early fourth century¹ in areas under noticeable Greek influence.

Many Thracian chamber tomb interiors have some embellishment, usually rather simple. There are, however, several with sophisticated painted decoration and one remarkable tomb, the interior design of which combines sculpture and painting. The presence of such decoration, especially figural, should be regarded as proof of both the prosperity and sophistication of the individual who commissioned the work and was likely to be interred there.

13.2 Monochrome Painting

Tomb decoration gradually evolved from simple painting of the walls in red or white (rarely yellow ochre) to complex decorative systems including figural scenes and elaborate ornament. Monochrome painting, though basic, had deep spiritual meaning centered on the mystery of the cycle of life. The presence of the color red in funerary contexts as early as the prehistoric Hocker burials suggests that red symbolized the opposition of life and death. Homer's purple was the color of death: "purple / crimson (Gk. *porphureos*) death of potent fate closed his eyes" (Il. 16.334; 20.477).

An eloquent example comes from a cist tomb discovered at Chernozemen, a village situated not far from Duvanli (Plovdiv district), where several similar cist burials with spectacular grave goods were excavated in the 1930s (Filov 1934; see also [Chapter 14](#) in this volume). The tomb is dated to the last third of the fifth century (Kisyov 2005). Parts of the interior walls are painted red, while the rest is white: the red color was applied to the walls on the side of the head and torso of the corpse, emphasizing their importance as containers of the soul and mind. Tombs painted red are not rare, especially in the Greek colonies on the western and northern coasts of the Black Sea: in and around Sozopol, Mesambria, and Odessos (Valeva forthcoming, n. 5).

White, black, red, and yellow ochre are natural pigments and were therefore used for decoration since remote antiquity. White, red, and yellow ochre were found in a recently excavated tomb near the village of Ruzhitsa, Yambol district (Agre 2005). The tomb has a rectangular burial chamber, an antechamber wider than long, and a dromos; all three rooms were roofed with granite slabs and their walls were coated with fine clay. It is a find of particular importance as regards both its construction, which combines limestone ashlars, mud brick, and megalithic roofing, and its decoration. The funerary chamber was painted white, while the wall of the entrance from the antechamber to the burial chamber, that is, to the most sacred part of the place, was decorated with a complex composition of geometric and stylized vegetal motifs: the pattern, partly based on meanders, zigzags, triangles, and squares, is too close to Phrygian cult monuments for Cybele to be overlooked (Akurgal 1955, 88–98; Roller 1999, 84–90; Berndt 2002, 3–20; brief note in Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming). This distinct and so far unique resemblance between Thracian tomb and Phrygian religious decoration recalls the common Early Iron Age cultural context embracing southeastern Europe and Asia Minor. This parallel is also important for the date of the Thracian tomb: despite the difficulties in dating the Phrygian rock-cut monuments related to Cybele (e.g., Midas monument, Büyük Kapıkaya, Arslankaya, among others), a consensus has recently emerged for dating them to the seventh and sixth centuries (Roller 1999, 98–102; Berndt 2012, 11–14 suggests the late eighth century). The pattern in the Ruzhitsa tomb contains, however, other motifs, such as spirals, leaves, and palmettes, which are closer to Greek forms. Finally, the striking similarity of the Ruzhitsa motifs to those

on Late Iron Age Thracian ceramics (Domaradzki 1994; cf. Vassileva 2005) argues in favor of a basic cultural unity in southeastern Europe and Asia Minor, where such a composite, but also somehow archaistic, monument could have been created. The overall design calls to mind the image of a rug hanging on the wall. Many depictions of clothing on Late Archaic Greek vases show not only the same motifs as those on the wall of the Ruzhitsa tomb, but also the same principles of composition, like symmetry and “horror vacui.” A cogent analogy would be the widely known scene of Achilles and Ajax playing dice on the Exekias amphora from Vulci, dated to ca. 530–525 (Arias and Hirmer 1962, fig. 62 and pl. XVII). The ornaments on the mantles of both men are so close to the design of the wall paintings in the Thracian tomb that the inspiration of the latter from textile patterns seems undeniable. The impact of textile patterns and motifs on the ornament of Phrygian cult monuments has also been noticed (Akurgal 1955, 44–45, pl. C), to which should be added the motifs on the wooden furniture and bronze belts found in tumulus M and P in Gordion (Young 1981, 19, 62–75, 176–187; Simpson 2010), and on tiles from Gordion and Sardis (Glendinning 2005). So far, the beginning of the fifth century has been suggested as a date for the Ruzhitsa tomb, on the basis of an early Chian amphora fragment found in it (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming, n. 1); while the tomb paintings certainly need a thorough study, the parallels from Phrygia and Late Archaic Greek vase painting encourage consideration of a slightly earlier date.

The decoration of the Ruzhitsa tomb has been discussed at length because it is unique and different from other Thracian tombs in conception, style, and date. We can only speculate about the symbolic meaning of the motifs, related undoubtedly to the natural cycle of life and death, but their concentration around the entrance to the burial chamber might have had magical power as well. We find similar magical signs painted on the main wall of a much later (third-century), humble tomb in the village of Borovo: a row of black and red triangles arranged in a specific combination (Valeva 1999a, 74, with bibliography). Magic was widely practiced in antiquity and Thrace was famous for its magicians and healers (Hom. *Od.* 7.294; Arr. *Bith. fr.* 13 [Eustath. ad *Dionys.* 322]; Plat. *Charm.* 155–157). The primitive symbolic and presumably magical language, as exemplified by the Ruzhitsa tomb paintings, was superseded in later Thracian chamber tombs of the Hellenistic period by royal, aristocratic imagery that incorporated Persian and Greek iconographies, with emphasis on warfare, hunting, procession, banqueting, and myth.

Knowledge shared between Thrace and Greece and the progressive penetration of select Greek cultural elements into Thracian culture are relevant to color symbolism in Thracian funerary art. In the *Odyssey*’s Second Nekyia, Hermes leads the pretenders killed by Odysseus along the “long marshy ways” to the waters of Ocean where stands the white rock marking the

Gates of Helios and the realm of dreams (Od. 24.1–14). Likewise, the white color was probably part of Hesiod's vision of the "icy" and "echoing halls of Hades" (Theog. 657, 767; Garland 1985, 49). The inscription on a gold lamella from Pharsalos, found in a grave dating ca. 350–320, reads: "On the right of Hades' house you will find a spring and next to it a white cypress ..." (Hatzopoulos 2006, 137; cf. Kottaridou 2006, 159 n. 19 with bibl.). The connection of the color white to death is explicitly illustrated by the application of white ground on funerary lekythoi from Classical Athens (Oakley 2004). Indeed, Greek written sources could explain, for example, the decorative program of the tomb discovered in Maglizh, in which an antechamber between the long corridor of the tomb and the funerary chamber is painted entirely in white. This "echoing ice hall" was "reached" by the deceased after his long way through the dark ("the marshy ways"), before entering the funerary chamber, in which painted pseudo-Panathenaic vases and luxurious red palmettes, quintessentially Greek motifs, symbolized his victory over death (Valeva 1999a, 70–71).

White and red, as colors related to death, were widely used in Mediterranean funerary symbolism and art; particularly evocative are south Italian vases with images of heroized dead in naiskoi (Söldner 2009), whose bodies are painted white – shadows of the once living – and wrapped in dark red himatia, as if embraced by death. White paint is normal in Macedonian tombs (Gossel 1980, 39–50; Miller 1993, 6), and found in several other chamber tombs in Thrace beyond Maglizh: Vetren (Venedikov 1946); Dolno Izvorovo (Nekhrizov and Parvin 2011, 46); and Shipka (Shushmanets tomb: Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming). The façade and interior walls of the "Helvetia" tomb in Shipka (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming) are completely covered with white paint, too; here, however, the surface is divided into relief zones in the Masonry Style, which is of Greek origin (Andreou 1988; Valeva 1999a, 71–72).² This style decoratively rendered monumental ashlar masonry using stucco (Andreou 1988, *passim*): thus, in the Kazanlak tomb the walls of the dromos are decorated with a white plinth, black orthostates, white frieze and red zone, above which there is a frieze of scrolls, painted moldings, and uppermost figural friezes; in the circular funerary chamber, the white orthostates stand on a greyish plinth and support respectively a black frieze and the red wall above it, followed by the great figured composition (Zhivkova 1975).³

Greek color symbolism is perceptible in the Kazanlak tomb, the most lavishly painted Thracian tomb: the painter used the traditional four-color Greek palette of yellow, red, white, and black (Brecoulaki 2006). Nuances compensate for this limited range of colors, which nonetheless imbues the painting with gravity and restraint. The colors also have a modeling effect: yellow and red optically bring the images forward and make them more vivid. Alexandrian frit was used for the blue color. There are blue hues in the folds

of the white garments and even on the face of the young lady (Figure 13.1). Deep blue continued to be applied in real or painted architectural ornamentation.



Figure 13.1 The main frieze of the Kazanlak tomb.

Photo by Nikolai Genov.

13.3 Use of Greek Architectural Elements

Elements of the Greek orders were widely used in the decoration of Thracian tombs. Usually they are only a few, like moldings and capitals, but in very rare cases there are fairly complete orders with columns and entablature. As in other cultures, Greek architectural elements were appreciated in Thrace for the perfection of their shapes and proportions. They were often applied as decorative accents – for example, the beautiful painted bead-and-reel frieze in the Kaloyanovo tomb, the Doric cyma on the slab with a lion in relief from Strelcha (see Figure 21.5), and the ornament on the door frame in the Strelcha beehive tomb (for the Ionic type door: Stoyanova 2005a), among others.

Architectural elements can help date a tomb or identify a workshop. Thus, examination of the doorframes of the tombs in Starosel and Strelcha, two neighboring localities, suggests that a local workshop may have been responsible for their design and completion (Valeva 2005a). Another workshop can be identified in the region of Sveshtari and Sboryanovo, where the important political center of the Getae rose in antiquity, soon to be surrounded by tumular necropoleis for local elites. At least two tombs, the Tomb with Caryatids (Stoyanova 2008; Chichikova 2012, 21–37) and Tomb No. 13 (Gergova 1996, 16–20) were decorated with similar Greek-style ornamental motifs and shapes comparable in proportion. The combination of cavetto and ovolo moldings was typical, with a preference for rendering these elements in paint rather than sculpture. A rare element – a twisted ribbon – is seen on the capital of the entrance to Tomb No. 13 (Valeva 2006). The mixing of Doric and Ionic elements in the same elevation was typical.

Perhaps the clearest example of the peculiar way in which decorative elements of the Greek orders were used in Thrace is offered by the interior design of the funerary chamber of the Kazanlak tomb (Figure 13.1). The dome of the chamber has a beehive shape, to which the painted decoration is perfectly adapted. Above the zone in Pompeian red, which surmounts the orthostates and the frieze, there is a painted imitation of an Ionic architrave with three fasciae (Zhivkova 1975, 63). The architrave is additionally decorated with alternating four-petal rosettes and bucrania, which in fact are elements typical of Ionic friezes. This is a rare fusion of these two elements of the entablature (Stoyanova 2005b, 303–304, 308). A Lesbian cyma, which runs above the architrave, is followed by the main figural frieze. The latter is crowned by a painted cornice comprising an egg-and-dart ornament, a row of dentils, a red-and-white twisted ribbon band in the place usually occupied by the bead-and-reel ornament, and a sima with 11 lion-head water spouts at the top. A smaller figural frieze with racing chariots runs just under the capstone of the dome, which was decorated with an eight-petal rosette unfortunately destroyed during the first entry into the tomb (Mikov 1954, 13). These ornamental and figural friezes form a sequence of circular bands of gradually diminishing diameter. This ingenious adaptation of the Greek system of vertical wall decoration to the shape of the dome is specific to Thrace (as seen also in the tomb discovered in the village of Alexandrovo, Haskovo district) and does not have contemporary parallels in early Hellenistic wall painting. The design is typical for the decoration of shallow vases, however, as, for example, on the silver-gilt phiale discovered in Bashova mogila in Duvanli that depicts a contest of apobatai (Filov 1934, 63, fig. 80).

13.4 Iconography

The specific mixture of Greek artistic conventions and their Thracian interpretation is further illustrated in painted figural compositions from

Thracian tombs. It is important to bear in mind, however, that these examples all date from the early Hellenistic period (second half of the fourth to the middle of the third century), when Greek cultural influence was at its peak and an artistic koine emerged in the Mediterranean world following the conquests of Alexander the Great (Steingraber 2006, 281–303). This, like the spoken koine, displayed a variety of regional styles: in Thracian tombs the late Classical Greek style was conveyed in distinctly different ways. The iconography also showed some admixtures, based on characteristics of local behavior, beliefs, and everyday life, and also – and this is very typical for Thrace – details that betray a longstanding cultural relationship with western Asia Minor.

A good example is offered by the amalgamation of Greek, Thracian, and west Anatolian iconography in the splendid main figural frieze decorating the dome of the funerary chamber in the Kazanlak tomb (Figure 13.1). The scene is centered on a seated man and woman and a tall lady offering fruits.⁴ The man, who is to be identified as the dignitary who commissioned the tomb, is seated in a Thracian manner (Xen. Anab. 7.3.21) on a silver chair (and not reclining on a kline). In front of him there is a low, square three-legged table with food on it. The man holds a deep silver phiale in his right hand while his left is stretched out to hold his wife's hand in a gesture of trust and love. The man wears a golden wreath. The lady is sitting on a throne, her left arm laid on the arm-rest, which is supported by a silver statuette of a sphinx; her fingers gently touch her slightly bent, beautiful face in a typical "Penelope pose." The woman standing on the left of the seated man is dressed in a white peplos and brown himation that covers her dark blond hair as well. Unlike the seated lady she wears no jewelry on her head or body. With raised hands she proffers a wide bowl with pomegranates, grapes, and other fruits. Her figure is bigger in comparison to the other attendants which suggests her exceptional, most probably divine, status (Persephone?). A cup-bearer steps up behind her, followed by two women playing trumpets. This half of the procession ends with a groom leading two horses and a soldier with a spear. The other half of the scene shows two maidservants of the mistress bringing toilet articles and the chariot that will take the noble couple away.

The painted banquet of the frieze has several semantic levels, one of which is the offering. The offerings on the table, consisting of bread and bunches of grapes, the fruits of the chthonic gods Demeter and Dionysos, are further emphasized by the pomegranates, related to Persephone and the underworld. Consuming the offerings can be likened to death, the nature of which is consumption. The banquet thus appears real and, at the same time, eternal, pertaining to the world beyond. The chthonic symbolism of the horses implies the imaginary reality of the afterlife as well. The chariot is ready to take the deceased away. The servants harness the horses as they did so many times in real life. In the antechamber the bones of a sacrificed horse were found, a

proof that afterlife was perceived as a reality in which the ruler would continue to be the glorious warrior served by his grooms, coachmen, armor-bearers, and servants. Finally, the chariot race painted in the smaller figured frieze refers to the funerary games that were organized in honor of the deceased (Tancke 1990).

Thus the scene is a depiction of funerary rites (funeral procession and funerary games) and eschatological beliefs (the reality of afterlife existence, for which food, horses, and company were provided), but, apart from both its concreteness and metaphysical implications, it should be viewed also as a common subject of funerary iconography in the Hellenistic Mediterranean. Although modern pragmatic thinking is inclined to label precisely the depicted banquets as real or imaginary, funerary iconography could not escape the ambiguity of the idiom, in which life and death remain linked in eternal rhythm. Modern interpretations of the banquet scene rely on written sources, which describe life, and therefore those banquets are believed to have had political and ideological connotations (in Persian context: Briant 1989; recent and more general: Capdetrey 2013, with lit.). The image of the banquet in a funerary monument, however, is related to death, although inevitably there are nuances that reflect the specific details of a historical period or geographic place.

By contrast, the paintings in the corridor of the Kazanlak tomb have a different, factual message. The frieze on the east side shows two small armies approaching each other, while their leaders meet in the middle for negotiations. The leader and some other members of the unit on the left side wear the *kausia*, the elite Macedonian headgear, while the soldiers on the right side wear helmets. These details make it clear that a real meeting between Thracian and Macedonian military units is depicted here (Valeva 1992). This image reflects the new perception of history and the new type of political individualism that appeared in the early Hellenistic period. Thus, in the decorative program of the Kazanlak tomb realism and archaic symbolism build the logic of the passage from life to death, which is the goal of any funerary program: the military exploits of the dignitary during his lifetime “lead” him to the status of *heros* after his death. We know from literary sources that he is believed to belong to the world of the semi-gods, “anthropodaimones” ([Eur.] Rh. 962–973: cf. Rabadjiev 2008; Liapis 2011, 96). This Thracian model of deification is expressed, however, through the Greek artistic idiom, understood as both iconography and style. As for the painting on the west wall of the dromos, it shows two soldiers in motion which may suggest a pyrrhic dance. Ivan Venedikov (1986) read the scene in light of Xenophon’s description of a dance performed by Thracian soldiers “leaping high and lightly and using their sabers” (Anab. 6.1.5–6). The dance ended with the fictional death of one of the soldiers, whose body was carried away by his comrades singing a song in honor of Sitalkas. Pyrrhic dances

played a role in funerary games as well (Ceccarelli 1998).

The combination of images that evoke the heroic earthly life of the dignitary and those that give promise of a similarly glorious and noble existence in the world beyond can also be seen in the Maglizh tomb, where pseudo-Panathenaic vases and palmettes as symbols of heroization represent the reward for the victorious life of the deceased, presumably a military man, as suggested by the depiction of a leather helmet and quiver in the area above the entrance to the funerary chamber (Valeva and Barbet 1998–1999).

The tomb in Alexandrovo also contains martial scenes, painted on both sides of the entrance from the corridor to the antechamber, and on the wall above the entrance to the funerary chamber (Kitov 2001). The latter is circular in plan and contains a stone bed to the left of the entrance. The walls are decorated in the Zone Style: next to the floor runs a brown-red band, above which a white zone includes a banquet with several banqueters and servants, and depictions of “gold” drinking vessels set directly on the ground and on a table (a *kylikeion*?). The presence of the *kylikeion* and the numerous attendants at the feast are reminiscent of the famous feasting scene on the façade of the Aghios Athanasios tomb, dated to the last quarter of the fourth century (Tsibidou-Avloniti 2005, 114–142).

Above the banquet scenes, there is a dark monochrome frieze and a broad expanse of wall colored in Pompeian red, followed by ornamental bands of Greek type. The main figural frieze spreads above and shows a sequence of hunt scenes, in which four horsemen and four footmen take part; helped by eight dogs, they chase two wild boars, a stag, a deer, and a royal stag. The men hold spears, clubs, daggers, and axes. Most attractive is the figure of a naked man, waving an axe and approaching an enormous wild boar that has already been attacked by two dogs. The figural frieze is crowned by a Lesbian cyma. The wall above it once was painted yellow (imitation of gold?) up to the key stone; the latter was decorated by a wheel in red, white, and yellow.

Once again we must ask whether the image of the hunt in the Alexandrovo tomb shows a real event or an imaginary reality in a transcendental world. As we know, images in antiquity were not exact reproductions of reality but intellectual constructions that aimed at expressing the system of values functioning in a particular society (Tripodi 1998, 59–62). In the frieze of the Alexandrovo tomb the use of the *lagobolon* for the deer hunt reflects a realistic hunt practice in Thrace (Nankov 2010), but the overall composition should be read on another semantic level, as an expression of cultural and ideological models: similar is, for example, the depiction of the hunt on the façade of Philip’s tomb, which, while containing details reflecting real hunt situations, is in fact a paradigm of royal iconography (Borza and Palagia 2007, 90–103).

The hunt was a major theme in Near Eastern art. As a funerary theme it was

particularly popular in the western satrapies of Persia such as Lydia, Lycia, Phrygia, and Phoenicia, which have produced rich evidence (Ghedini 1992, 74; Franks 2012, 28–35; Vassileva 2010, 40–44). As is broadly acknowledged, western Asia Minor was the cultural context in which Near Eastern royal iconography merged with Greek myth as a means to heroize the person of the ruler (e.g., Barringer 2002, 174–175; Bruns-Özgan 1987). Unlike Attic depictions of the hunt, which have erotic connotations, the hunt in the eastern monuments was an activity for nobles and symbol of courage and mastery. Xenophon could write that the pupils of the centaur Cheiron, who all later became illustrious heroes, learned “many noble lessons” from hunting that created “in them great virtue, for which they are admired even today” (Cyn. 12.18); at the same time, hunting helped to maintain a strong body and afforded “the best training for war” (Cyn. 12.1). Such noble aspects of the hunt were inherent in Thracian iconography as well.

13.5 The Decorative Program

The main painted scenes in the Thracian tombs described so far are banquet, hunt, funerary procession (ekphora), martial scenes, chariot race as part of funerary games, pyrrhic dance, and mythological scenes including specific divine and heroic characters. Each of these themes was essential to the funerary iconography of the eastern Mediterranean and can be traced back to the Archaic period. Three painted tombs discovered in western Anatolia are revealing for the emergence of funerary iconography. Two are from northern Lycia: the earliest, at Kızılbél, is dated to ca. 525 (Mellink, Bridges, and Callori di Vignale 1998). The scenes on the western wall depict the preparation of the warrior for his journey to the Other World and include representations of the deceased leaving his family, banqueting, arming, sacrifice, and women with ritual objects (Miller 2010, 322). On the northern wall the scenes depict the deceased in his life activity as ruler, the honors he receives, and some members of his entourage and probably family (the queen?) in a procession. On the eastern wall the paintings include a deer hunt, boar hunt, boxers, a procession of chariots, and marching warriors. The myths of Medusa and the Ambush of Troilos by Achilles, an episode from the Trojan war, are depicted on the south wall, along with a lion hunt and wrestlers. Thus, we see the whole set of themes and motifs that will remain in funerary art for centuries to come. A Lycian tomb from Karaburun, dated ca. 475, presents a more thoroughly conceptualized and better organized program. The main scene here is the banquet, flanked by a battle scene and an ekphora painted on adjacent walls (Miller 2010, 323–329). A tomb near Tatarlı (Turkey) from ancient Phrygia in western Asia Minor has a decorative program that includes military scenes (battle between Persians and Scythians), a mythological subject (the Cattle of Geryon, one of Heracles’ deeds), a banquet scene, and an ekphora; unfortunately the program has not been

completely preserved. The tomb, built of beams, was dated ca. 480 on the basis of dendrochronology (Summerer 2010, 122–150). Turning to the west and considering painted decoration in Etruscan tombs dated ca. 540–480, we observe the predilection of the Etruscans for the same themes: banqueting, hunting, athletic competition (*agon*), and funerary ritual scenes; some depictions are more distinctive and present erotic subjects and the *Phersu* game, which was probably included among the funerary games (Steingraber 2006; 2010, 354–367).

These examples of painted tomb decoration find parallels in monuments that feature sculpted decoration, many of which are in Lycia and Caria in western Asia Minor. Most eloquent is the early fourth-century Nereid Monument built for the dynast Arbinas and decorated with several friezes that document “historical” military victories of the dynast and moments of his life cycle, as well as scenes of hunting, battle, banqueting (including preparations), sacrifice, and procession. Brunilde Ridgway makes the whole scheme comprehensible, observing that “the Dynast is glorified through his life exploits, which become progressively more symbolic and eventually merge with those of epic heroes and mythological figures to suggest eternal afterlife in another world” (1997, 81). The repertoire of iconographic motifs that we find in western Anatolia and which gradually emerged in the sixth century, became traditional in the fifth century and was manifested even more gloriously in early Hellenistic art in monuments like the pyre of Hephaestion (Diod. 17.115.1–5; cf. Palagia 2000).

Such comparative examples clearly reveal the conventions that influenced the decorative program of ancient tombs from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period. This persistence of themes was due to basic ideas about the virtuous and good life, which for elites consisted in daring both in war and hunting, and in lavishness in symposia. Myth furnished the ideological background for this program, manifesting itself through individual stories with moral purpose, such as the punishment of *hybris* (as in the Bellerophon myth); first and foremost, however, myth acted as a universal ontological explanation of the world, with its natural cycle of life and death, and of society, as a paradigm of order. And this weighty ideological and ethical context had yet another social purpose: to secure the basis for the self-representation of the ruler.

The decorative program of the coffered ceiling of the Ostrusha tomb, however, differs from these combinations of traditional themes. It employs Dionysiac iconography, a series of images of Achilles, including his mother Thetis and probably some other heroes from the Trojan war, individual images of deities (Cybele perhaps, and Nereids), mythological creatures (Sirens, Silenus?), and a hero from the earliest generation, Bellerophon. Although these scenes cover less than half of the initially painted surface, it is clear that the fabric of the decoration was mythological (Valeva 2005b). Thus, the paintings of the Ostrusha tomb betray a different spiritual and cultural

context, which at first reflects the individual choice of a person steeped in Greek intellectual and aesthetic values, but which belongs at the same time to the Hellenistic world and its ideological pattern. Hence the prominence of Achilles, the greatest Greek hero beneath the walls of Troy and model for Alexander the Great, in whose campaign the Thracian dignitary most probably took part, as suggested by some Persian traits in the tomb's architecture. Knowledge of Greek literature is perceptible through the iconography of the Achilles series, which follows both the Homeric story and the elaboration of the myth by Aeschylus in his early fifth-century trilogy *Achilleis*. This cultural and political background is not the only reason for the interest in Achilles' story. The descent of the great hero into the Kingdom of Hades (Hom. Od. 11) gave him a chthonic aspect, which was further emphasized by the chthonic nature of his mother Thetis (Valeva 2005b, 153). The strongest chthonic and funerary connotations, however, come from the presence of Dionysus (as revealed through his thiasos, although possibly the god too was once depicted) and of the chthonic goddesses Demeter and Persephone, implied through the abundant vegetation painted throughout the entire surface of the ceiling. The association of chthonic Dionysus with the Eleusinian deities Demeter and Persephone was proclaimed by Pindar (I. 7.3–5) and strongly supported by the gold tablets with Orphic texts that were meant to guide the deceased in the Underworld (details in Valeva 2005b, 154–156). Besides, in the fourth century there was a renewed interest in Dionysus, which Walter Burkert (1985, 261–262) ascribed to attempts by the Argead royal house of Macedon to claim descent from the god.

One more tomb interior design belongs to these new trends in Hellenistic funerary art, that of the Sveshtari Tomb with Caryatids (Chichikova 2012) near the presumed site of the Getic capital of Helis. Situated in a region where Lysimachus' control met Getic dynastic and territorial ambitions, it is a Macedonian-type tomb with a prominent east Greek influence reflected in its interior decoration (Figure 13.2). Abundant archaeological evidence indicates that Helis maintained intensive trade and exchange with Greek cities on the west Pontic coast and through them with more distant Hellenistic cities. The Tomb with Caryatids has a dromos, an antechamber, a funerary chamber, and a lateral chamber, the function of which remains unclear. The interior of the funerary chamber was designed in the Doric order: four engaged columns support a Doric architrave and frieze with triglyphs and metopes, although the cornice is Ionic. The walls between the orthostates and the architrave are decorated with ten female figures in high relief whose raised hands support the entablature and the vault. A naiskos strangely inserted in the west corner of the funerary chamber concealed the main funerary bed, and four of the Caryatids, with a small Corinthian column in their midst standing to a height of 1.2 m, equal to that of the female figures (Figure 13.3).

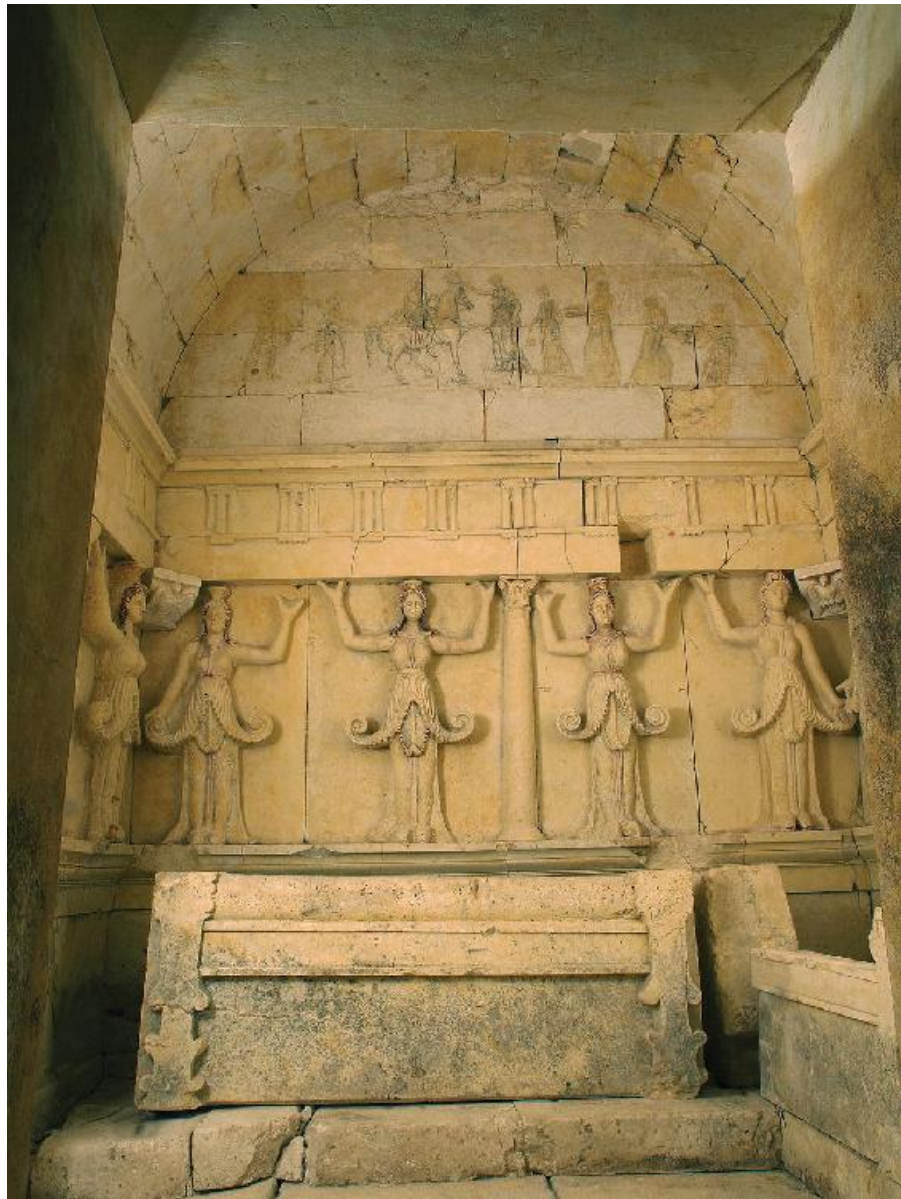


Figure 13.2 The funerary chamber of the Sveshtari Tomb with Caryatids.

Photo by Nikolai Genov.

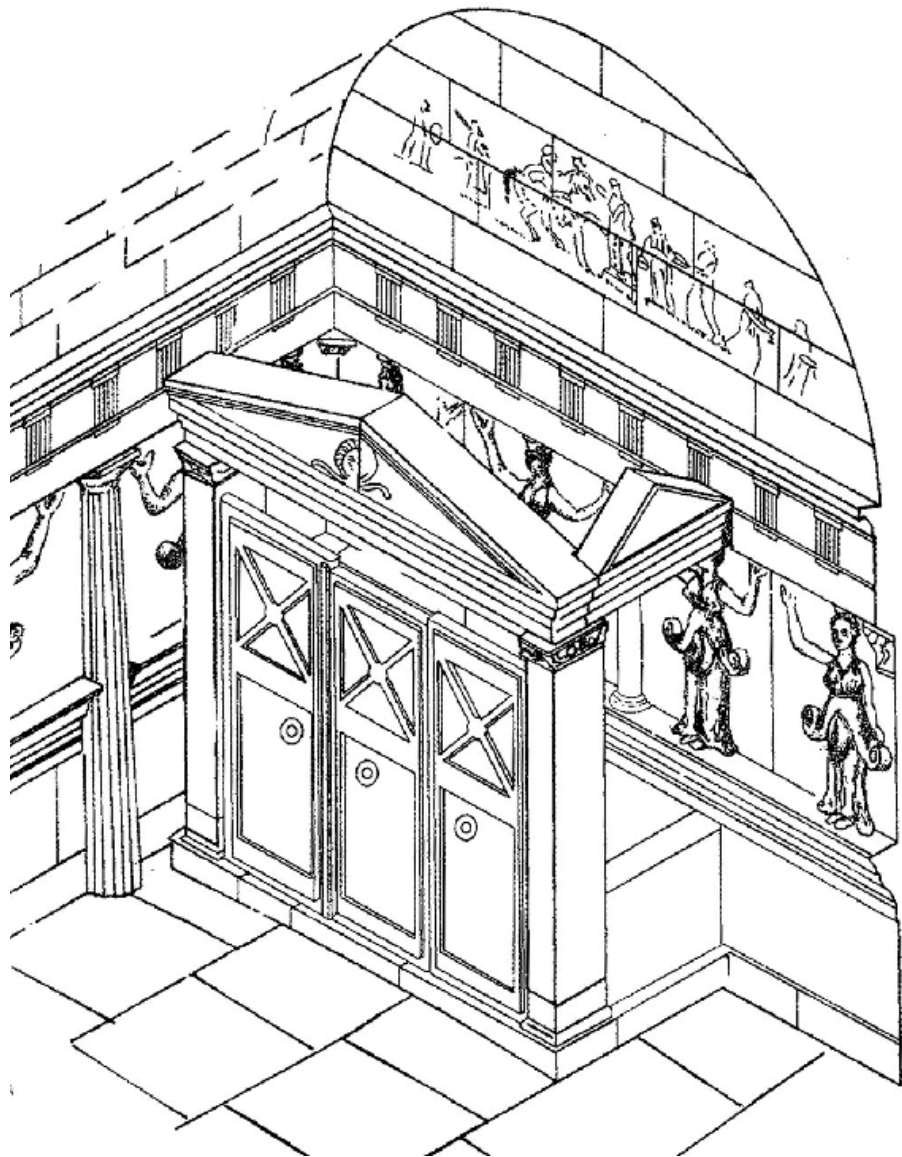


Figure 13.3 Reconstruction of the interior design of the Sveshtari Tomb with Caryatids. Conception: Maria Chichikova. Drawing: Totko Stoyanov, based on the drawing by Stefan Goshev.

The architectural elements in the tomb do not have structural function, nor can their undeniable aesthetic effect be their sole purpose. The order served to partition the interior into spaces with gradual symbolic meaning. The Doric wall represented a temenos, the sacred precinct, in which was situated the naiskos: the Corinthian column marked its interior. The design can be interpreted as a miniature and underground imitation of glorious achievements in Classical architecture, such as the enormous complexes of the Ephesian

Artemision and the Temple of Apollo at Didyma (Didymaion), specifically their hypaethral areas in which naiskoi with Archaic sacred images stood (Valeva 1999b; recently on the Artemision: Jenkins 2006, 47–70; basic: Bammer 1972; on the Didymaion: Gruben 1980, 359–375). It is significant that an intensive phase of reconstruction at the Didymaion was initiated exactly at the beginning of the third century (Gruben 1980, 365), when the Sveshtari tomb was also built. To some extent the cemeteries of Alexandria also show such dependence on great temple architecture: they have hypaethral halls and adjoining compartments for the burials (Pfrommer 1999, 97 (Mustafa Pasha III), 100–101 (Shatbi), 118–124).

In the Sveshtari Tomb with Caryatids the lunette above the naiskos bears a painted scene in which a rider in a triumphant posture, followed by two soldiers, is crowned by a lady with female attendants. An important detail, a ram's horn behind the ear of the rider, evokes the horns of Ammon, which were an attribute of Alexander, deified while still living. Interpretation of the painting thus becomes ambiguous: either Alexander was painted here as an alter ego of the Getic ruler who commissioned the tomb, or this is the image of the Getic ruler himself that indicates his pretension to be considered equal to the great Macedonian king or to his followers, the Diadochi, who also chose horns as attributes implying power and strength (Valeva 1997). The painted scene is the logical final accent to the eschatological implication of the entire decorative program: the owner of the tomb, who, we assume, was a glorious commander such as Alexander, is elevated by the Caryatids – divine mediators and mourners at the same time – to the realm of the goddess (Persephone herself?), thus securing his deification. With its eclectic features, splendor, and aspiration to glorification and immortality, the Sveshtari Tomb with Caryatids is a typical funerary monument of the early Hellenistic period.

Another ambitious project was the Golyama Kosmatka tomb (Stoyanov and Stoyanova forthcoming, with bibliography). It has no wall paintings, but specific sculptural decoration. Most enigmatic is the bronze head discovered 7 m in front of the façade, and recently definitely identified as the portrait of Seuthes III (Saladino 2012–2013). It was detached from a statue, which probably stood in Seuthopolis. Inside the tomb, there is a double-leaf marble door between the two antechambers, bearing the images of Helios and Medusa in medallions. Helios has blond hair and there are traces of red on his mouth and the medallion. Depictions of Helios in tombs are extremely rare, although he appears on some Italian vases found in burials. His presence in Golyama Kosmatka can be explained by his role as “light of life,” “father of time,” and “paragon of justice,” which are his epithets in the Orphic Hymns (Athanassakis 1977, 13–15). Besides, only Helios saw the rape of Persephone by Hades (HHDem. 62–81).

A pair of low-reliefs with two antithetic lions (see [Figure 21.5](#)) was found during the excavation of the two structures, seemingly both tombs, under the

Zhaba tumulus in the small town of Strelcha, Pazardzhik district (Kitov 1977). The panels have ornamental borders of painted leaf-and-dart and bead-and-reel (astragal) cymatia. The modeling of the animals' bodies is particularly fine and they are undoubtedly imported pieces, exemplifying a non-local, presumably Anatolian, tradition. The two panels were set on either side of a central item, forming along with other elements an elaborate façade, the reconstruction of which is eagerly awaited.

Concerning the decoration of Thracian tombs, a few words should be said about the doors and the furniture (cf. [Chapter 12](#)), elements related to burial rites and eschatology. The stone doors are of Ionic and Doric type (Stoyanova 2005a; 2007): the decoration of the door frame in Ionic style of the Zhaba mogila beehive tomb in Strelcha is the most beautiful and accomplished known from Thrace so far. Some stone doors have coffers or solar symbols painted red (Shushmanets: Valeva forthcoming). Thresholds and floors were also colored in a number of tombs (Valeva forthcoming). Stone funerary beds, tables, and chairs have also been found in Thracian tombs. The beds usually imitate the fashionable Greek type (as in the Tomb with Caryatids: Chichikova 2012, 53–56), but others are unique (as in the Dolno Izvorovo tomb: Nekhrizov and Parvin 2011). A rich set of tomb furniture comes from Naip tomb, in which a high dignitary of Thracian origin was presumably buried (Delemen 2006, 256–259; Baughan 2013, 270–271).

13.6 Conclusions

The varied decoration of Thracian chamber tombs cannot but strike the beholder. It was influenced by many regional traits, including the specific geographic situation of Thrace and its ethnic, political, commercial, and cultural relations with near or distant peoples and monarchies. The Ruzhitsa tomb is an example of the local Early Iron Age background that features possible Phrygian influence and certainly has a magical meaning, which will disappear later, when new ideological and artistic methods of afterlife glorification combining Persian, Anatolian, and Greek forms appear in the early Hellenistic period. The Hellenistic period saw the development of the cult of the ruler, modeled on divine cult. Heroic cult, once reserved for mythological heroes, gradually conquered a large social stratum of ordinary, though prominent, people (Ekroth 2007, 112–114). The development of ideas and the progressive involvement of Thrace in the political, economic, and cultural life of the Aegean region in the Classical and Hellenistic periods were immediately reflected in the construction of expensive funerary monuments. The appearance of lavishly decorated chamber tombs in Thrace was certainly financed by booty from Alexander's campaign. Their disappearance should be related to both the Celtic invasion in the third century and the general lack of stability in the eastern Mediterranean, which included the annexation of Greece and Macedonia to Rome in the second century and, consequently, the

end of political contact between these regions and Thrace.

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Notes

- 1 All ancient dates BCE unless otherwise noted. I thank Denver Graninger and Professor Brunilde Ridgway for editing the English version of my text.
- 2 Various described by scholars as “Architectural” (Rostovtzeff 1919, 150), “Relief Architectural Style” (Miller 1993, 42 and n. 41), “Masonry” (Bruno 1969, 308), or “Structural” (Rostovtzeff 1919, 148).
- 3 A similar painted structure is displayed on the walls of the Sarafova mogila (or Krun II) tomb: plinth, orthostates, frieze, red wall, and an uppermost white zone (Getov 1991; Kitanov 2003).
- 4 The height of the frieze is 58 cm, that of the seated lady, 52 cm, and of the female servant next to her, 54 cm.

Chapter 14

Gold, Silver, and Bronze Vessels

Julia Valeva

14.1 Use and Deposition

The Bronze Age background

Homeric epic is the earliest written source for the existence, use, and worth of metal vessels in Thracian society: Priam, the king of Troy, when preparing gifts to ransom Hector's body from Achilles, "weighed out ten talents of gold, and brought moreover two burnished tripods, four cauldrons, and a very beautiful cup which the Thracians had given him when he had gone to them on an embassy; it was very precious, but he grudged not even this, so eager was he to ransom the body of his son" (Il. 24.228–234). These vessels enjoyed a long use life as prestigious symbols of power and wealth at elite or sacred feasts before being placed in graves or otherwise deposited in the earth. Their fixed presence in any rich burial suggests that Thracian elites, like Mycenaean elites, considered feasts to be instrumental in the imposition of dominant status. On the basis of Linear B tablets and Minoan and Mycenaean representations of feasts and related activities dated to LM I (ca. 1600–1450, e.g., Tylissos), and LH III (1400–1060, e.g., Pylos), scholars suggest that Aegean civilization nurtured the gradual development of elite and communal feasts as models of social identity and interaction (Wright 2004, 16, 36–40); Mycenaean society, war-loving and vertically stratified, disseminated the cultural model of elite feasting to neighboring cultures, including Thrace. An eastern impact, however, on ritual feasts of religious, secular, or funerary character in the eastern Mediterranean is suggested by the earliest gold vessels discovered in the royal cemetery at Ur, ca. 2650–2500 (Woolley 1934, 302, pls. 160–165), and by Hittite texts describing in detail the rites of the incineration of the deceased royal couple at Hattusa (Christmann-Franck 1971), similar to the description of the funerals of Patroclus and Hector in Iliad 23–24.

The splendid golden vessels discovered by chance near Vulchetrun in northern Bulgaria (Venedikov 1988) corroborate both the Homeric evidence and modern theories about the role of elite feasting in ancient societies. The Vulchetrun assemblage is among the most remarkable Bronze Age sets of precious vessels; the vessels' considerable weight (12.5 kg in its present fragmentary state), the high technological standards employed during their creation, including the combination of gold and electrum and application of inlay of niello type, and their high aesthetic value made them a perfect

medium to display the exceptional wealth and status of their owner. At the same time, the vessels' shape and decoration clearly indicate that this gorgeous set was used in sacral ceremonies. The Vulchetrun treasure is also a proof of the exchange of luxurious artifacts between the Mycenaean world, Thrace, and the Danubian basin (Venedikov 1988, *passim*).

Other spectacular deposits like the Vulchetrun treasure have been discovered by chance and lack any archaeological context. Among the richest sets are those from Early Iron Age Kazichene and from late Classical and early Hellenistic Rogozen, Borovo, Lukovit, and Panagyurishte. Two hypotheses explain these deposits: either they were hidden in troubled times or they were votive gifts to chthonic deities (Marazov 1996, 265–293). The Kazichene deposit, for example, has been interpreted as an offering to the so-called “Great Goddess of the Thracians” (Fol 1975); it consists of three vessels of different material nested one within the other: a tenth- to eighth-century gold cup was placed inside a seventh-century clay vessel, which was placed inside an eighth- to seventh-century bronze cauldron (Stancheva 1974).

Ritual

The absence of Thracian script and the scarcity of written sources about Thrace are insurmountable obstacles for understanding religion in Thrace; contemporary evidence from similar, neighboring cultures is thus used to shed light on Thracian evidence. Linear B tablets, Hittite cuneiform tablets, and suggestive images like the ring from Tiryns indicate that vessels, including gold goblets and bowls, were dedicated to deities in Late Bronze Age cultures (Wright 2004, 45). The Vulchetrun treasure, dated by most scholars to ca. 1700–1400 (Venedikov 1988) and hence contemporary with Mycenaean and Hittite Bronze Age cultures, may thus be interpreted in the context of the civic and religious prerogatives of the sovereign and regarded as ritual offerings to the gods, similar to those described in the Hittite royal archives (e.g., KUB X, 18; KUB XXV, 18 among others).

In later periods, the ritual use of vessels in Thrace is evidenced by a large number of images. For example, goddesses (or priestesses) holding rhyta with animal protomes and small phialai are represented on the rhyton from Poroina, while on the signet ring from Zlatinitsa a woman pours a libation with a phiale (Agre 2011, 39–44), perhaps making an offering to the gods for the victory of the rider in front of her; a gilt silver greave, also from Zlatinitsa, depicts a rider holding a rhyton with stag protome and a lady sitting on a throne, holding a spindle and drinking from a cup: both figures should be regarded as related to the cult of the Potnia theron, “Mistress of animals,” whose image appears higher up on the greave.

Feasting

Many vessels made of precious metals were to be used, both in life and in the prospective afterlife, for wine feasts of mundane and ritual character, while some bronze vessels were meant for ablutions. Among the rare written sources for feasting in Thrace is Xenophon's description of the feast given by Seuthes II (Anab. 7.3.21–33), during which the Thracian ruler shared bread and meat, thus asserting his alliance with the Greek army led by Xenophon (cf. Wright 2004, 15). After the meal, wine was served in horns (*kerata*) and gifts were exchanged. Xenophon does not actually specify the material of these horns, though the use of precious vessels in a feasting context is suggested by Homer at *Odyssey* 9.196–212, where Odysseus describes the metal vessels and wine that he received as a gift from Maron (cf. Athen. 1.26a) of the Thracian tribe of the Kikonians. While the Kikonians have disappeared from history, the fame of Thracian wine remains (Marazov 2000) and modern analyses of archaeological evidence supply data about the type of wine the Thracians used to drink: for example, the wine residue in an amphora from the Zlatinitsa burial has revealed that the wine was red, dry, and strong, with a slight fruity flavor; it was made from wild grapes, with resin added to prevent it from turning into vinegar (Nikolova 2008).

Although in Homer wine could be called a drink that is “manly” (euenor: *Od.* 4.622), in Thrace vessels have been discovered in opulent burials of women as well, like the Kukuva, Mushovitsa, and Arabadzhiyska mounds in Duvanli. No written or pictorial source suggests that elite Thracian women participated in feasting, but it is logical to assume that they would have had gatherings, in which libations preceded the pleasures of social life (cf. about Macedonian royal women: Carney 2010, 415–18, esp. 416). That wine feasts demonstrated status and affiliation to an elite group is indicated not only by the persistence of deposits of precious vessels in graves but also by the fact that many such vessels appear to have been heirlooms, for they display traces of repair and were clearly manufactured long before deposition.

A revealing passage in the *Odyssey* (10.352–371) describes the stages of heroic feasting: preparation for bathing, followed by the bathing itself; anointing; sitting on a chair with a stool support for the feet; hand-washing; and, finally, consumption of food and drink served in vessels of gold and silver. Finds from burials as well as the banquet scene painted inside the Kazanlak tomb (see [Chapter 13](#)) illustrate that a similar template for feasting was traditionally followed in Thrace in the pre-Roman period. For example, the set of vessels from Bashova mogila (Duvanli), dated to the end of the fifth or beginning of the fourth century (Filov, Velkov, and Mikov 1934, 59–79), includes: a silver phiale mesomphalos with gilt, incised image of four competing apobatai; a silver kylix with gilt, incised image of Selene; a silver-gilt rhyton with horse protome; a small, silver jug; a bronze hydria, a bronze situla, a bronze mug, a bronze basin, and a bronze hemispheric vessel; two Red-Figure hydriai; and a black-glazed small jug. Comparable assemblages

are known from grave no. 2 in Mogilanska mogila, Vratsa (Torbov 2005) and the warrior's cist tomb in Chernozemen, dated ca. 430–425 (Kisyov 2005).

14.2 Gold and Silver Vessels

Most vessels of precious metal found in Thrace belong to the common types of phialai, bowls, goblets, rhyta, jugs, and strainers. There are also rare finds, such as the toilet box in the shape of a shell (Nankov 2011), the aspergillum-like strainer (Kisyov 2005, 39–40; similar rare pieces: Comstock and Vermeule 1971, 418–419, no. 604; Zimi and Sideris 2003, 51, fig. 17b), and the lebes-like hemispherical vessel with large horizontal shoulders (both in silver and in bronze: Agre 2011, 170–171).

Phialai

The phiale, both a ritual and a banquet vessel, usually had a bulbous protuberance at the center of its bottom known as an omphalos (navel), hence the adjective “mesomphalic” commonly used to describe such phialai; if not plain, phialai were decorated with figures, floral motifs, and occasionally geometric elements. Both the typical Greek shape with straight rim and the Achaemenid type with flaring offset rim and shallow body (Strong 1966, 76, fig. 20) were familiar in Thrace; many, varied phialai are based on foreign prototypes but reflect subsequent local development. Long series of phialai have been discovered in the villages of Radyuvene and Alexandrovo, both in the Lovech district, but the largest number of phialai comes from the Rogozen treasure (Marazov 1996, 9–58). A bronze phiale, found in Sofronievo, province of Vratsa (Nikolov 1965, 167, no. 24), is believed to be the earliest known example from ancient Thrace, dated approximately to the early sixth, if not the late seventh, century on the basis of comparison with bronze phialai from the sanctuary of Hera Limenia in Perachora, Corinth (Payne, Dunbabin, and Blakeway 1940, 121; Valeva 2006, 20).

As a result of the Persian presence in these territories during the Scythian campaign of Darius I and the Greco-Persian wars (see [Chapters 4](#) and [21](#)), Thracians became directly acquainted with the material culture of Persian royals and elites; typical Achaemenid phiale shapes and decorations thus found their way into the everyday life of local elites, like the Buckelphiale type (Luschey 1939, 41–73) from the Mushovitsa mound, or the sixth-century, gold Lotosphiale type (Luschey 1939, 121–124) from Daskal Atanassovo (Archibald 1998, 177; Valeva 2006, 20). In the early fifth century, decoration of phialai with radial flutes springing from the omphalos, thus resembling an open flower (Zungenphialen: Luschey 1939, 76–94, esp. 77, 88–91), became very popular (e.g., the phiale from Kukuva mogila: Archibald 1998, 179). A more complicated design, based on the lotus flower and almond (Blütenkelchphiale: Luschey 1939, 95–121), occurs on Rogozen phiale no. 2,

silver with gilt omphalos (see [Figure 21.1](#)); a nearly exact parallel is known from Sindos and dated ca. 510–500. The numerous Blütenkelch type of phialai found in Thrace and Macedonia were inspired by Persian prototypes but cannot be traced to a specific atelier, despite attempts to the contrary (e.g., Sideris 2008, 342). Some phialai, particularly those decorated with flutes that spread from the omphalos in one or two rows or with almonds alternating with heads of humans, usually female, or animals (e.g., bulls), indicate local, Thracian production (Stoyanov 2003).

Plain deep bowls (calyx phialai), which are seen carried by members of several delegations in the Persepolis reliefs, were widely used by well-to-do Thracians, as indicated by not only archaeological evidence but also wall paintings, like those within the Kazanlak tomb: many such finds, like those sets from Radyuvene and Lukovit, are thought to have been produced locally. Similarities between items from Thrace and Macedonia (e.g., phialai Derveni B12 and Arzos: Yalouris 1980, 119) suggest that imports in both regions were coming from common centers of production (presumably in the eastern Aegean), along with reciprocal exchange of models between Thracian and Macedonian silversmiths' workshops (Zimi 1994).

A specific type of silver calyx phiale with relief medallion at the bottom was presumably created in Hellenistic Macedonia (Pfrommer 1987, 234–238; Barr-Sharrar 1982, 131–132) and spread to Thrace as well (e.g., phiale from Mogilanska mogila: Torbov 2005, 78–79, 171).

Goblets

Another drinking cup popular in Thrace was the cylindrical beaker with flaring sides or rim; the shape can be traced to Iran, ca. 2500–2000 (e.g., Bussagli 1956, 49, no. 25). The earliest metal examples of these elegant vessels from the Balkans come from the Trebenishte graves, dated to the end of the sixth century, and are discussed as representative for Archaic Greek culture (e.g., Filov 1927, 31, no. 36, 97–107; Popovic 1956, 109, no. 50). Two engraved silver beakers from Dalboki (Filov 1930–1931, 47–49, figs. 38–40) and the horizontally grooved Boukyovtsi goblet (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, 93) show different profiles, but in general the shape was inspired by items such as the Assyrian goblet of Assurbanipal (668–627) (Bleibtreu 2000, 7–8, no. 19). Handleless clay cups, cylindrical or of “kalathos” shape, imitating the metal ware, were in use in Athens in the sixth century and were occasionally commissioned for the Thracian market (Oakley 2009). Local Thracian production developed as well, to which should be assigned the Haskovo silver goblet decorated with vertical flutes and the group of four goblets with distinctive biconical shape and zoomorphic decoration, the so-called “Agighiol-type” goblets (Taylor 1989).

Rhyta

Another type of drinking vessel was the rhyton; derived from the horn, it had a wide mouth and a bottom part in the shape of an animal, in which a small hole was provided for letting the fluid flow. Metal vessels imitating real horns are rarely found in burial deposits (e.g., Trebenishte: Filov 1927, 30, no. 35). There is a horn-like vessel or rhyton in the hands of the cupbearer in the rather deteriorated funerary banquet scene of the Alexandrovo tomb. Rhyta, especially those made of silver or gold, were highly appreciated in Thrace; the main types had either the shape of an animal head or of a horn decorated with animal foreparts at the bottom (protome) (Marazov 1978). According to the length of their horn, they may be called either short-horn or long-horn rhyta (Valeva 2008). Pseudo-rhyta (rhyta without a spout), were apparently also in use (Stoyanov 2010, 139). Some long-horn rhyta found in Thrace are of extreme beauty, such as the silver-gilt rhyton from Bashova mogila, Duvanli (Filov et al. 1934, 67, no. 4), as well as the rhyta from the Borovo treasure (Ivanov 1980; Stoyanov 1998) (Figure 14.1).



Figure 14.1 The treasure from Borovo. Regional Museum of History - Russe.

Photo by Nikolai Genov.

The large number of short-horn, animal-head rhyta found in Thrace suggests that they were popular among Thracian princes and dignitaries. Most splendid

are the gold rhyta from the Panagyurishte treasure, but all other examples, usually silver-gilt, are also of remarkable manufacture and suggestive iconography (e.g., Rahmanli, Rozovets, Zlatinitsa, among others).

Of particular interest are amphora-rhyta with two outlets at the bottom, which presumably served special rites, such as establishment of brotherhood. The amphora-rhyta of this type, from Kukuva mogila in Duvanli (Filov et al. 1934, 47–51) (see [Figure 21.4](#)) and the Panagyurishte treasure (see below, and Marazov 1978, 100–109) are masterpieces, revealing in addition the penetration of luxury objects into Thrace for the needs of the local elites. Rhyta with ovoid shape and one outlet at the bottom were certainly meant for libations, as suggested by their decoration as well. On the Borovo egg-shaped rhyton the divine couple Dionysos and Ariadne is represented as served by a winged, solar-crowned Eros, who holds a phiale in which he pours wine from a jug; behind him stands the krater from which the wine has been drawn, and a lion's head above marks a fountain: both the purification with water and the wine feast in honor of Dionysos are thus represented. The jug rhyton from Mogilanska mogila in Vratsa has the shape of a pine cone, Dionysian symbol of fertility and indulgence (Minčev 1980, 179–185).

Jugs

Jugs were a constant part of the Thracian set for wine feasts. Those of smaller height (average 8–9 cm) served as dippers or mugs: both metal and clay variants were imported and the clay jugs were subsequently imitated (Bozkova 1989, 4). The taller jugs (average 11–18 cm) largely increased in number after the discovery of the Rogozen treasure in 1986 (Nikolov 1986; Marazov 1996, 59–107). This mass of evidence suggests the definition of a Thracian type of jug, which emerged ca. 400–350 under Greek and Persian influence, and whose shape was based on the oinochoe, but developed into a specific type with repeating characteristics of S-shaped profile, circular mouth, low handle, foot, decoration, and gilt (similar comments in Stoyanov 2005, 235–236). Jugs are either undecorated or decorated with ribs, flute-tongues, floral ornament, or figural scenes. The decoration of one group of jugs, with plant leaves, veined, broad at the base and with an upturned top, evokes the Egyptian white lotus (Pfrommer 1987, 86–121; Shefton 1993, 179; Stoyanov 2005, 236).

The masterpiece

The drinking set made of gold and found accidentally in Panagyurishte ([Figure 14.2](#)) is the most opulent and representative find within the extremely large and variegated collection of precious vessels from Thrace (recently: Archibald 1998, 275; Kitov 2000; Agre and Kitov 2004). The treasure has a total weight of 6.164 kg and includes a phiale, an amphora with two spouts at

the bottom, and eight rhyta. The amphora-rhyton, measuring 39 cm in height and weighing 1635 g, is decorated with a frieze of seven male figures and a two-leaf door; the scene has thus far resisted satisfactory interpretation. Smaller images at the bottom show the baby Heracles strangling two snakes, a reclining Silenus, and two Africans' heads through whose lips the liquid pours out. The phiale, measuring 24.7 cm in diameter and weighing 845.7 g, is decorated with the heads of 72 Africans and 24 acorns in four concentric circles around the bulging navel (cf. von Bothmer 1962, 166). Three of the Panagyurishte rhyta are shaped as women's heads, adorned with jewels, one of which wears a helmet as well; their handles are in the shape of sphinxes; the other rhyta are theriomorphic. Lampsacus has been suggested as the place of the set's manufacture (Venedikov 1961).



Figure 14.2 The treasure from Panagyurishte. Plovdiv Regional Archaeological Museum.

Photo by Nikolai Genov.

Word and image

The vessels discovered in Thrace have a pronounced historic value thanks to the inscriptions (in Greek) punched or incised on their bodies. These are usually names, most often belonging, it would seem, to Thracian rulers and elites. Among the names most often encountered is Kotys, presumably the Odrysian king Kotys I, who ruled ca. 384/3–360. The names of other rulers appear as well: Kersebleptes, Satokos, Amatokos. In several instances the

name, typically in the genitive case and probably indicating possession, is accompanied by the name of a settlement, preceded by the preposition “from” (e.g., ἐξ), which in modern scholarship is regarded as evidence for tribute collection in the form of worked metal (Archibald 1998, 260–261; Zournatzi 2000). The periodic visits of the ruler were a mode of exercising control over his territory. It is highly probable that, like the Persian king, Thracian dynasts collected the most precious and beautiful objects wherever they went. One may speculate whether in Thrace the visit of the ruler to a settlement was not similar to what Herodotus has related at 7.119 about the preparation of the table of the Persian king: all precious vessels placed at his disposal were carried away after the withdrawal of the court. Yet, many precious vessels were received by Thracian royals and elites simply as gifts (Thuc. 2.97.4; [Chapter 21](#) in this volume; Painter 1989, 76).

The names of other owners (of unknown identity) emerge as well: four vessels from the Bashova mound were property of a certain Dadaleme; the names of Kainos and Didykaimos are inscribed on phialai from the Rogozen treasure. So far, no Thracian vessels with dedicatory inscriptions have been found, unlike the practice in Greece, where numerous silver phialai were dedicated to divinities and temples (von Bothmer 1962, 154). There is, however, one inscription that reads: “Kotys, son (pais) of Apollo.” Interpretations of the inscription within the framework of Thracian Orphism have been attempted (Fol 1995); a relationship of King Kotys through his theophoric name to the goddess Kotyto and to Apollo as his child / servant / priest seems plausible. The longest inscription on Thracian vessels known so far, on Rogozen phiale no. 29, Κοτυος ἐξ Βεοῦ · Δισλοιας ἐποίησε, can be translated as “[possession] of Kotys from Beos; Disloias made [it]” (Fol 1989, 33) and possibly gives the opportunity to discern the name of an artist – Disloias (cf. [Chapter 17](#)).

Several vases with figural depictions in relief are crucial for our attempt to reconstruct Thracian religion and mythology, such as, for example, the Borovo ovoid vase, the Panagyurishte amphora, the Poroina rhyton, and Rogozen jugs no. 154–159. The interpretation of the images, however, is hampered by our ignorance of the context to which they belonged. Some scholars see these images as illustrations of Greek myths, others as applications of Greek iconography to specific Thracian myths, related mainly to the Great Goddess (see [Chapter 29](#)). In any case, such scenes offer valuable evidence for the fourth-century evolution of the Thracian artistic idiom from zoomorphic to anthropomorphic imagery (Marazov 1974). Thracian vessels present no scenes equivalent to the so-called “Scythian ethnographic style,” in which depictions of Scythian everyday life appear on vessels of precious metal (Archibald 1998, 178).

Imports and local production

Many authors have discussed, with considerable reservations, the possible

centers of production of vessels found in Thrace (Archibald 1998, 263–275; Zournatzi 2000, 688 n. 34). A. Zournatzi has commented on the “striking typological affinities between the precious vessels found in Thrace and in Achaemenid Persia” (2000, 686) and there are some clear examples of Persian imports to Thrace, like the wide-bodied vase with typical Iranian shape from Kukuva mogila (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, no. 116). The already cited text of Xenophon (Anab. 7.3.15–28) implies also the way that some vessels from the territory of the vast Persian empire reached Thrace: since the retreating Greek regiments, led by Xenophon, had taken part in the ill-fated battle of Kunaxa in 401, in which Cyrus was defeated, the silver cup owned by Timasion and presented by him to Seuthes most probably was acquired during this campaign and accordingly bore stylistic features of Persian vessels.²

The typical Greek shapes arrived as imports, often of great value, and reflect direct connections with Greek centers of production, Athens among others. As already acknowledged, the presence of Greeks in the interior of Thrace was far more important than it was believed before (graffiti evidence: SEG 49.912; SEG 52.711; SEG 53.670; SEG 55.773; SEG 57.642, and summarizing: Domaradzka 2005). Some vessels from Thrace have been considered the product of Ionian or Propontic ateliers, like the amphora-rhyton from Kukova mogila (Filow 1934, 202) or phiale no. 97 from the Rogozen treasure (Marazov 1996, 30–31), but such attributions must remain provisional pending additional research. We can be sure that there was serial production of luxury objects that were subsequently acquired by different customers, since the relevant material known to date contains several doubles of vessels coming from different places, like the phialai from Rogozen and Sindos mentioned above. Local, Thracian production of metal vessels, still to be thoroughly studied, has been documented by technological analyses (Vasilev 1980), finds of tools for metalworking (Antonov 2007), and research on iconography and style (e.g., Marazov 1996, 109–251; Stoyanov 2003).

14.3 Bronze Vessels

Although bronze was a substitute for gold, the value of a bronze vessel could be high and one suspects that often only wealthy families could afford to deposit such vessels, especially those of larger size, in the graves of their relatives. Hydriai, situlae, basins, and pitchers were the most common high-priced bronzes used by well-to-do Thracians. Other bronze vessels have also been discovered in different burials such as, for example, squat jugs with either elongated or bowl-shaped mouth, cauldrons, and cups, among others.

Situlae

Kraters, while present in almost all burials in the Trebenishte necropolis, are

missing from the later graves in inland Thrace, where buckets (situlae), in which water and wine may have been mixed, are common instead (Chichikova 1969, 68–71; Venedikov 1977; Archibald 1998, 189–90, 375–378). Macedonia is considered a region from which situlae spread as far as Scythia (Treister 2010, 9; cf. Greek Ministry of Culture 1988, 282, no. 232), however, this is valid for the fourth century. The stamnoid type of situla was labeled a specific Thracian type by Venedikov (1977, 65, 95), which later reached neighboring territories, but the catalogue by N. Zimmermann lists the earliest examples of this type (type C: Zahlhaas 1971, 96–107) as found in Macedonia and Greece and belonging to the first half of the fourth century (Zimmermann 1998, 47–54, 165; see also Barr-Sharrar 1982, 129–130; Pfrommer 1983, 250–262; Treister 2010, 13). The buckets of this type discovered in the interior of Thrace (Izgreve, Zlokuchene, Polyanovo) and dated either to the middle (Venedikov 1977, 95 ff.) or third quarter of the fourth century (Chichikova 1969, 68) are dated by Zimmermann in the last quarter of the century (1998, STM 8 and STM 10).

The most popular type in Thrace, however, was the egg-shaped (ovoid) situla. Two buckets of this type come from tomb 2 in Mogilanska mogila: one is considered a product of Athenian craftsmen on the basis of its resemblance to the Kalamaria situla (Ninou 1979, no. 332, pl. 27); it may be present in Mogilanska mogila as part of the booty carried away from Abdera by the Triballi following their raid of 376/5 (Paunov and Torbov 2000, 169). Several ovoid situlae have more elaborate ornamentation, such as the situla from Pastrovo, decorated with Dionysus leaning on a rock, and the situla from the Teteven area with Dionysus on the back of a leaping panther; the latter resembles a situla with Dionysus thought to be of south Italian provenance (Comstock and Vermeule 1971, 303, no. 428; Archibald 1998, 278).

A recent find, the bell-shaped bucket from Zlatinitsa, which belongs to Zahlhaas type A5 (Agre 2011, 155–158; Zahlhaas 1971, 36–38), is so close to situla inv. no. 44309 in the National History Museum in Sofia that it proves their mass production and synchronous diffusion. The bell-shaped situlae found in Thrace often have a plain or slightly ornamented frieze under the rim. Finally, three kalathos-type situlae have been discovered in Thrace, among which a fine bronze-gilt example deposited in the Dalboki grave (Filov 1930–1931, 51, no. 5). The kalathos-type situlae were in use in Etruria since the end of the sixth century, from where they spread to the Greek world through the colonies in Magna Graecia. Their fourth-century refined shape reached Macedonia (where four examples from Derveni tombs are known) and Thrace (Pellegris 2004, 359 and bibliography in n. 37).³

Hydriai

Considering the presence of hydriai in all rich burials in the Duvanli mounds, Filov suggested that these vessels might have played a specific role in the funerary ritual of Thracian notables. In a Greek cultural context, hydriai served as funerary urns as shown by the six vessels from Mesambria (Nesebar), all discovered in graves (Bozkova and Kiashkina 2013). In inland Thrace the picture is somewhat different. A recently found hydria comes from the Chernozemen cist tomb (Kisyov 2005, 36–37), situated near the Duvanli and Dalboki burials that have supplied several fifth-century hydriai (Filov 1930–1931; Filov et al. 1934). The burial rite here was inhumation, however, and the hydriai might have been used not as urns but for ablutions and as wine containers.

Figural decoration is present on the hydria from Bashova Mogila (head of Silenus and lions devouring a stag), on another from Varna (Siren with outspread wings), and on two hydriai from Nesebar: the first has the figures of Boreas and Oreithia at the base of the vertical handle, and the second, those of Eros and Psyche. Many vases disintegrated leaving only their handles because the bodies were hammered from sheet bronze, while the other parts were cast. A well-preserved set of three handles, one vertical and two horizontal, is displayed today in the Museum of Asenovgrad.

Many of the hydriai discovered in Thrace are of the kalpis type (Archibald 1998, 188–189; Bozkova and Kiashkina 2013, 28): fine items come from tomb no. 2 in the Mogilanska mound in Vratsa (Paunov and Torbov 2000, 164–165) and the Chernozemen and Mesambria tombs cited above.

Podanipteres

A footbath (podanipter) is known from Staro selo (Venedikov 1964), which, bronze gilt on the outer side, was soldered to a gilded, bronze tripod; the grooved handles, terminating in palmettes, were soldered to the vessel with silver (cf. Milne 1944). Footbaths have been found both in the Trebenishte and Duvanli graves (Filov 1927; Filov et al. 1934, 56, no. 18), and in many burials from the end of the fifth and fourth century (Torbov 2005, 84). The example from the tomb under Bashova mogila, with colonette-type handles (Filov et al. 1934, 70, no. 10), is particularly close in shape to the footbath discovered in the Chernozemen tomb (Kisyov 2005, 37–39).

Imports and local production

Filov, in discussing the Trebenishte evidence (1927, 97–108), believed that some of the objects could have been produced in Chalkis, but that others came from Corinth, which had been acknowledged as an important production center for small bronze drinking vessels since the studies of G. Richter (1915, 216 and *passim*) and W. Lamb (1929, 185–186). P. Jacobstahl rejected the Corinthian origin of the Trebenishte vessels, detecting rather Ionian,

specifically Samian, stylistic parallels (discussion about the centers of production of bronze vessels with focus on Trebenishte objects: Vasilev 1988, 9–13). Today we find a statement that the Trebenishte bronzeware is “Corinthianizing” and “indisputably linked to the pattern of workshops serving the Adriatic coasts” (Archibald 1998, 186). Obviously opinions are controversial: I. Venedikov saw the egg-shaped situlae as produced in centers along the Aegean, Black Sea, and Sea of Marmara coasts (1977, 59), while M. Chichikova expressed the opinion that some of the situlae from Thrace were produced in Attica and the northern Peloponnese (Chichikova 1969, 71; cf. Paunov and Torbov 2000, 169). Indeed, Richter (1937, 538) was correct to presume long ago that “there were many centers [of manufacture] each with its own output” (1946, 366, focusing, however, on Athens). Her words are constantly corroborated in modern research in the field of ancient bronzeware (Vasilev 1988, *passim*; Sideris 2000, 16–17). The Bulgarian scholar V. P. Vasilev rightly pointed out that the bronze vessels (and objects) found in Thracian burials were mass produced in the majority of cases. Some shapes resembling vessels of clear, western Asiatic provenance were found in both Thrace and Scythia and suggest a common market (Archibald 1998, 180, also 186). Indeed, the striking resemblance between the sets of bronze vessels from the Duvanli barrows and finds like those from Peschanoe in Ukraine, probably a boat cargo, demonstrates the existence of a pattern of bronzesmiths’ production in Greek style meant for both Thrace and Scythia (Treister 2010, 9–10, 20–22).

Although molds found in Bulgaria firmly testify that bronze vessels were produced locally in Thrace (Antonov 2007), the topic has yet to receive broader scholarly treatment. Local craftsmanship is further suggested by the specific stylization of forms in Thracian minor arts, especially prominent in horse harnesses.

14.4 Conclusions

In this chapter the word “Thracian” has been constantly used to describe objects and phenomena from different parts of the vast territory on which the Thracian tribes lived. Indeed, there is a close resemblance between evidence from different regions. One must never forget, however, that there were many differences in rites, habits, and historic roles among the different Thracian tribes. Therefore, local idiosyncrasies need to be explained, including those related to the production and dissemination of metal vessels. On a wider scale, the impression that the Persian elite lifestyle made on Thracian rulers and especially constant contacts with Greek culture were fundamental in shaping the Thracian cultural idiom. This short overview of Thracian vessels positions Thrace on the map of Classical and Hellenistic toreutic art and helps to distinguish local production of metal vessels in Thrace from that of other, often powerful, centers of production in the Mediterranean.

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shape.

Notes

- 1 All ancient dates BCE, unless otherwise noted. I am very grateful to Denver Graninger and Professor Brunilde Ridgway for their editing of the English version of my text.
- 2 For vessels accidentally found after shipwrecks along Thracian shores, as described by Xenophon (*Anab.* 7.5), see Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, 83.
- 3 In Scythia a single example from Gaimanova Mogila was reported (Treister 2010, 11).

Chapter 15

Adornments

Milena Tonkova

15.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to major developments in jewelry fashion in Thrace ca. 1200–1,¹ with an emphasis on sociopolitical context. Adornments decorating the body and dress are among the most evocative monuments of Thracian culture. In elite Thracian society, they marked the wealth and power of the wearer, as well as the religious or ceremonial functions performed by the individual; only secondarily did they function as simple decoration. During the Classical period, the Early Iron Age foundations of Thracian jewelry fashion were thoroughly transformed; jewelry became distinctly elitist and was adapted by elites in the emerging states of Thrace, above all the Odrysian kingdom, to mark their new political and social status. In the early Hellenistic period, jewelry fashion became strongly influenced by broader trends in the Hellenistic world. After the mid-third century, while jewelry fashion of the coastal Greek cities continued to follow broader trends in Greek jewelry, inland Thrace pursued a different trajectory; there Celtic influence prevails, while Greek fashion is less prominent.

15.2 The Early Iron Age, 1200–500

To fully appreciate the transformation of jewelry in Thrace in the Classical period, it will be useful to begin with a preliminary sketch of the Early Iron Age background (Gergova 1980; 1987). Jewelry used in this period was made of bronze, iron, silver, amber, and, less often, gold. Most common during the twelfth and eleventh century were bronze, single-spiral fibulae with twisted bow, as well as double-spiral fibulae with a high triangular plate and bow with knobs; the hoard of gold earrings and silver belts from Barzitsa (Gergova 1982) is also dated to this period. Fibulae of the eighth and seventh century are of the single- or double-spiral type, large, made of bronze, and, in some regions like the Rhodope mountains, also in iron. During the seventh and sixth centuries, the fibulae become lighter and gradually display simpler ornamentation; the bows are knobbed, twisted, quadrangular, or round in section. Single-spiral fibulae have smaller dimensions with either a low triangular or high quadrangular catch plate. The so-called Thessalian-type fibulae appear in western Thrace at this time. At first, such fibulae are heavy, with incised geometric decoration; later their size is reduced and the cuttings

on top of the catch plate become V-shaped. Both early and later versions are often made of silver. Developments within this type are thought to have led to the emergence of the typical, Thracian-type fibulae of the Late Iron Age.

Of the adornments associated with dress, round pendants and open-work belts appear popular in northwestern Thrace. The bracelets are heavy, made in bronze, and have tapered ends and geometric designs. Torques are rare and have a twisted body. Earrings, usually hoops made in bronze or silver, are also uncommon; the so-called “nail-shaped” type is also present. The large, gold, boat-shaped earrings from the Barzitsa hoard are unique. Necklaces include amber beads, beads made of spiral twisted bronze wire or strip components (e.g., so-called saltaleone), or cylindrical bronze beads. Open bracelets with overlapping spiral terminals or gold, ring-shaped ornaments served as hand and hair ornaments. Finds of gold and silver diadems, as well as pectorals, are extremely rare at this time.

15.3 The Early Classical Period, ca. 500–375

Assemblages and general characteristics

Adornments are known from relatively few, rich burial assemblages, ca. 500–350. While these are concentrated along the upper and middle reaches of the Maritsa (anc. Hebros) and Tundzha (anc. Tonzos) Rivers, the likely core of the Odrysian kingdom, such finds are also known from Getic territories of northeastern Thrace. Adornments are typically associated with weapons in presumed warrior burials.² An exception is provided by the three rich, weapon-free graves in Kukuva, Mushovitsa, and Arabadzhiyska tumuli from the famous necropolis at Duvanli (Filov 1934). These are traditionally interpreted as female burials (Filov 1934, 190), though, according to A. Fol (1983, 5) these too are of males.

The earliest complexes in Odrysian territory are from Duvanli. The burials in Kukuva and Mushovitsa tumuli date to the mid-fifth century, while that from the Arabadzhiyska tumulus belongs to the final third of the fifth century (Archibald 1998, 162–165). Associated with these burials were splendid sets of head and body ornaments, consisting of numerous hoop or boat-shaped earrings, pendants for earrings, a necklace, a torque, bracelets, finger-rings, chains with pendants and fibulae, and pectorals; most of these finds were previously unfamiliar to the Thracian jewelry repertoire. Many rich warrior burials can also be dated to the middle and second half of the fifth century, which contain weapons, gold pectorals, and often gold rings, as in, for example, tumulus no. 1 near Chernozem (Kisyov 2005) and Golyamata tumulus near Duvanli, among others. In two burials from the Svetitsa tumulus near Shipka, dated ca. 450–400 (Kitov 2006, 85–91), and from Dalakova mound near Topolchane, dated ca. 400–375 (Kitov and Dimitrov 2008), the

gold rings are not associated with pectorals, but with impressive gold funerary masks. Rich warrior burials are found also in Getic territories, containing weapons as well as gold breastplates and other categories of gold ornament. For example, a grave with weapons and horse trappings dated to the late fifth century from Golemanite also contained a torque, bracelets, pendant-amulets, and a breastplate (Tsarov 2008); similarly rich complexes are known from Koprivets (Stanchev 1997, 38) and Dolishte (Doncheva 2004).

The mid-fifth-century transformation of Thracian jewelry fashion was radical. It is marked by both the increased use of gold and the introduction of new types of earrings, necklaces, and rings. Greek-style adornments, employing the technical resources of Greek jewelry art, are the prevalent finds. These are either cast or made in the repoussé style, decorated with granulation and, less often, filigree. The earliest adornments with granulation and filigree are: the earrings, earring pendants, necklaces, and bracelets from the three rich, so-called “priestess” burials from Duvanli of the mid-fifth century; the ring and bead-amulet from Golemanite; and the earrings, crescent-shaped pendant, and fibula from Koprivets. Glyptic items, like scaraboid rings, also mark their first appearance, as do glass beads. These are restricted to the Odrysian territories. The repoussé technique is widely applied in the decoration of the breastplates – for freehand tracing or punching the ornaments.

Adornments from Odrysian territories are quite diverse stylistically. Most of the Duvanli necropolis artifacts can be included among the principal Greek jewelry forms that come in many variants. The circulation of these items in Thrace, however, is specific. The earrings, earring pendants, and necklaces have distinctly Greek manufacture and are often cited as classical examples of the Greek jewelry art of the time (Higgins 1961, 122–124, 213; Deppert-Lippitz 1985, 122–130, 145–150); rings with a horseman adhere to Greek models, but are fashioned after a local style (Boardman 1970, 214, 230). The torque is of a known late Early Iron Age type. The bracelets, breastplates, and fibulae have prototypes in the Archaic and early Classical jewelry craft of the northern Balkan peninsula and Macedonia. Details in the composition of these popular models, however, render them unique, such as the use of gold and the employment of decorative techniques previously unknown in Thrace, like filigree and granulation. Therefore, analysis of the Duvanli adornments is two-fold. On the one hand, all basic forms have analogues in Greek and Macedonian jewelry (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, 99–108; Archibald 1998, 190–194; Tonkova 2000–2001; Tonkova and Penkova 2010). Yet, by and large, the Duvanli headdresses, made up of six or ten earrings, combined with earring pendants, are unique, with no comparanda outside of the necropolis. It would thus appear to be an original Thracian headdress, possibly part of an evocative ceremonial costume; the model was designed for the Odrysian elite and might be considered their distinctive mark (Tonkova 1997a, 18–22; Tonkova and Penkova 2010).

Hence, one may reach the conclusion that the new Thracian repertoire of splendid gold adornments from the fifth century was not primarily the result of fashion trends. Such jewelry satisfied efforts to invent a unique insignia of authority, recognizable to subjects, allies, and enemies alike. The distinctive Greek traits in the earliest adornments from the Odrysian territories, combined with elements characteristic of Thrace alone, suggest that Greek artisans and goldsmiths, who may have been stationed in inland Thrace with the Odrysian court, influenced the appearance of these ceremonial items (Tonkova 1998; Tonkova 2000–2001; Tonkova and Penkova 2010).

The Getic early Classical jewelry fashion seems rather more eclectic. Adornments found here mirror the interactions of the Getae with Greeks, Illyrians, and Scythians. Even Achaemenid jewelry has been found in several sets, as well as a fibula from north Italy. Gold pectorals are again the distinctive trait of the Getic adornments; recalling forms known from the Odrysian territories, they testify to contacts between the Getae and the Odrysian realm (Tonkova 2000–2001).

Categories of jewelry

Hoop- and boat-shaped earrings, with a long history in Greek and Near Eastern traditions and with numerous variants, spread in Thrace in the mid-fifth century. Made in gold, with thickened body and spherical and conical beads at the ends, they feature fine granulation and filigree. At Duvanli these come not in pairs, but in sets of six or ten that are uncharacteristic of Greek customs. In the three “female” burials from Duvanli discussed above, they are associated with omega-shaped and spiral earring pendants, forming together a unique headdress. A distinctive type of hoop earring, with a pyramid featuring granulation at one tip, appeared for the first time during this period at Koprivets; although derivative of Greek models, the type was created and developed as genuine Thracian jewelry, which remained in the local repertoire until the end of the fourth century.

Another mid-fifth-century premiere is the classic Greek necklace composed of biconical and spherical beads alternating with complex, composite beads of supporting and suspended elements. Three examples come from the Duvanli “female” burials. The necklace from Kukuva tumulus has a central flower bud pendant (Figure 15.1), while the Arabadzhyska tumulus necklace features fine granulation. Though of recognized Greek types, they find no exact comparanda outside of Thrace. The many similarities among the three imply that they came from the same atelier attending to Thracian elites. From the Getic territories come a necklace of fluted tubes and large flower-bud pendants (Dolishte), as well as single pendant-amulets of different shapes: crescent (Koprivets), pyramidal, or biconical (Golemanite). Glass beads also appear during this period; instead of being strung together, at this time they were likely worn individually or in combination with other elements as

amulets. The necklace of bronze saltaleones combined with glass beads is considered an Early Iron Age survival (Tonkova and Penkova 2010, 204, pl. X.2). The gold cylindrical elements with transverse flutes, in imitation of the earlier saltaleones that are known from Dolishte, are another innovation of the time.



Figure 15.1 Gold necklace from Kukuva mogila near Duvanli, Plovdiv province. Middle of fifth century BCE. National Archaeological Museum, Sofia, inv. 6193, 6136.

Photo by Krasimir Georgiev.

Torques were also transformed. While the twisted wires and outward-bent terminals of the omega-shaped torque from Duvanli's Kukuva tumulus recall the previous age, it is now quite heavy and made of gold. The Golemanite gold torque, with tapering terminals, is a novel type with parallels in Scythian contexts.

Fifth-century bracelet shapes are also novel. These heavy, open hoops are now made of gold. Similar to models from the Near East, the terminals of the bracelet depict animal heads. Bracelets with stylized representations of snake heads from Duvanli's Kukuva tumulus are very close to characteristically

Macedonian, more precisely Chalcidic models, yet their ornamentation with large granules is unique to gold items. Bracelets with antelope-head (?) terminals from Dolishte are believed to be imports from Anatolia (Doncheva 2004, 126). Bronze spiral and open hoop bracelets with snake-head terminals and fashioned in a distinctive local style are recovered chiefly from pit sanctuaries (Tonkova and Penkova 2010, 205, pl. X.2).

The classic, hoop-and-bezel shape of finger-rings appears for the first time in Thracian warrior burials in the mid-fifth century. Archaic traits in some artifacts suggest considerably earlier manufacture. The two foremost Greek types are heavy, all-metal rings with decorated bezel and rings with a swivel bezel with gem, the so-called scaraboids. Another rare type, with granulated bezel and hoop in archaic fashion, is represented by the Golemanite ring. The massive gold signet rings with incised representations of a horseman and the name of the owner (Duvanli, Golyamata, and Arabadzhiska tumuli) become increasingly characteristic of the Odrysian elite and enjoy a long development. The horseman theme evolves into an investiture scene by the end of the fourth century. Unlike the heavy signet rings, gem scaraboids were produced in Greek workshops and had a fleeting presence in Thrace. The rings from tumulus 1 at Chervenkovci Mogili near Brezovo, from Chernozem, and from Krushare have chalcedony and agate gems, with deities, athletes, and warriors rendered in refined Greek style. These early glyptic items disappear after the fifth century. One later local imitation is the famous Ezerovo ring, all gold and engraved with a Thracian inscription in Greek letters (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, 374, no. 206).

Chains attached by fibulae are also first found in the fifth century. The earliest examples are loop-in-loop gold chains with flower-bud pendants from Mushovitsa tumulus, Duvanli. The pendants are attached to the edges of a breastplate by three gold “Thracian type” fibulae. Thus there emerges an upper body adornment for elites in Thrace, distinctive of the region, and rendered in several variants until the end of the fourth century (Tonkova 1998).

The entire spectrum of Early Iron Age fibulae gradually blended together before being replaced in the fifth century by the simplified and elegant model of the single-spiral, bow-shaped fibula of so-called “Thracian type.” Examples are known from throughout the entire territory of ancient Thrace over the course of the following centuries. Among the earliest examples are the three gold fibulae from Mushovitsa tumulus in the Duvanli necropolis dated to the mid-fifth century. Gold fibulae are attested only during this period; gold fibulae have also been found at Koprivets and Dolishte. The Dolishte fibula retains the form of the Thessalian type, but, like contemporary Greek models, has a hollow bow made in repoussé of gold sheet. Occasionally, the boat-shaped “Italian type” fibulae appear, such as the gold fibula from Koprivets (Tonkova 2000–2001, 283–287). Early variations of hinged fibulae in bronze

are attested at Pernik and Pistiros, the core distribution area of which was the central Balkans (Vasileva 2012, 34; Vasic 1999, 103, 105, type I, II).

Gold, ornamented pectorals were invariable components of Thracian ceremonial dress and armor in the fifth century. These were a characteristic marker of Thracian elites and remained so throughout the Classical and early Hellenistic period. The pectorals are diamond, crescent, or oval shaped and usually decorated with embossed geometric motifs, and also figural scenes, normally arranged around a stylized “tree of life” motif. Pectorals are found in almost all rich burials in Thrace, from the Odrysian and Getic territories alike (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, 103–105). The earliest and most impressive examples, from Dalboki, Duvanli, and Chernozem, are decorated with figural and floral designs inspired by Greek and Oriental themes and styles; they are also very large and heavy: the Chernozem pectoral, for example, is made of 1 mm thick, 23 carat gold sheet, measures 31 cm x 27 cm, and weighs 132.80 g (Kisiov 2005, 48).

15.4 The Late Classical Period, ca. 375–325

The burial assemblages of this time are less numerous, but equally impressive in terms of wealth. Immensely rich warrior burials remain traditional in Odrysian territory. A rich male burial in Dalakova tumulus, near Topolchane, is dated approximately to the second quarter of the fourth century. The burial gifts include a gold mask, a gold phiale, silver rhyta, and a gold signet ring with a portrait of a ruler and the engraved names of Seuthes and Teres (Kitov and Dimitrov 2008). In another exceptionally rich burial of a young man from Zlatinitsa, there was placed a gold wreath, ornamented gold appliqués that have been interpreted as diadem segments, and a gold ring, as well as a silver greave depicting what has been interpreted as the Thracian Great Goddess (cf. [Chapter 29](#)); a nearly identical greave is known from Agighiol (Sîrbu 2006, 90). These finds were accompanied by expensive sets of drinking vessels and a full set of armor; the burial is dated to the mid-fourth century (Agre 2011) or a little later. Similar finds are known from Rosovets and the Mogilanskata tumulus in Vratsa (Agre 2011, 31–44).

The gold fittings from Topolchane and Zlatinitsa reflect an important moment in the evolution of the insignia used by Thracian elites. On the one hand, there is a clear attempt towards self-definition in the creation and use of distinctive markers of power and status, such as the gold signet rings that appear to present an investiture scene in which a goddess bestows the insignia of authority upon a horseman, interpreted as a ruler. Local elites can also be seen to attempt to identify themselves with contemporary political elites outside of Thrace, especially the Macedonian kings. So, for example, gold wreaths and other luxury items that match those found in royal Macedonian tombs begin to

appear in Thracian warrior burials at this time. Close dating of these assemblages has proved elusive, unfortunately, and it remains unclear whether the peak of their distribution should be placed in the third or, more probably, last quarter of the fourth century (Tonkova 2013).

A rich assemblage from a tumulus near Kapinovo, dated to the mid-fourth century, features bronze and silver serving sets, Greek Red-Figure ceramics, and a unique piece to adorn the upper body or head, consisting of several long chains with flower-bud pendants and one pendant with a ram's head in local style (Tonkova 1998; Antikenmuseum Basel 2007, no. 122). Gold buttons, the first to be discovered in Thrace, belonging to a Greek chiton that was placed as an offering, were also recovered in the burial. The distribution of buttons in Thrace was limited and restricted to the second half of the fourth and early third century (Tonkova 1997a, 25).

In the second half of the fourth century, evidence for Thracian adornments is enriched by numerous iconographic monuments, especially toreutic artifacts and ceremonial armor with depictions of real jewelry. Ceremonial gilded silver helmets, for example, are often decorated with laurel and ivy wreaths, and the divine female personae featured on ceremonial silver greaves from Zlatinista (Agre 2011, 50) and Agighiol (Sîrbu 2006, 90) wear torques, necklaces, and earrings that correspond to finds known in the region. Furthermore, clothes with buttons and agraphae (brooches), ivy wreaths, and other decorations are depicted upon the vessels from the Borovo hoard. The goddesses from the Panagyurishte treasure wear diadems and necklaces.

15.5 The Early Hellenistic Period, ca. 325–250

Assemblages and general characteristics

After the mid-fourth century, the appearance of adornments gradually changed. Typically late Classical forms evolved and inspired the creation of true masterpieces of the Thracian school, such as the silver adornment from Bukjovtsi (Figure 15.2). At the same time, many new Greek models and decorative techniques defining the style of early Hellenistic jewelry art were introduced, including the use of incrustation, enamel, and polychromy: Thrace became part of the Hellenistic jewelry koine (Tonkova 1997a). Moreover, the early Hellenistic jewelry fashion in Thrace grew more democratic: rich burials with many gold adornments became less numerous, while single items appeared in a greater number of burial complexes, and artifacts of the same type were rendered in both precious and base metals.



Figure 15.2 Silver adornment from Bukjovtsi (modern Miziya), Vratsa province. Second half of fourth century BCE. National Archaeological Museum, Sofia, inv. 2558-A.

Photo by Krasimir Georgiev.

Imposing sets of multiple gold ornaments were found in several very rich tumulus burials from inland Thrace. As previously, the most numerous and finest examples come from the Odrysian territories. Gold and silver chain necklaces and a gold ring with investiture scene were recovered from Malkata tumulus in the Kazanlak valley, dated to the end of the fourth century (Kitov 2005; Kitov and Tonkova 1996; Antikenmuseum Basel 2007, nos. 140–144). Tumulus 1 near Seuthopolis and the Mal-tepe tumulus near Mezek (Filov 1937, 7–79) have yielded lion's-head hoop earrings and necklaces with conical beads, which constitute the typical adornment set for the early Hellenistic period. From the Getic territories comes the rich grave from Kralevo, with lion's-head earrings, snake-shaped bracelets, and a gold horse harness (Ginev 1983).

A new jewelry center with its own style was established in Triballian territory

in northwestern Thrace, known from numerous hoards in which silver jewelry is prominent. The original adornment composed of hinged fibulae, chains, and pendants with human masks from Bukjovtsi (Figure 15.2), together with wide lamellar bracelets and hinged fibulae from the Vladinya, Granitovo, and Stalijska mahala hoards (Dimitrova 1966), make up a peculiar regional horizon of silver jewelry items. These are among the most representative objects produced in Thrace in the late fourth century. Other finds, like the gold wreath, disc earrings with boat-shaped pendants, gold ornamented appliqués, and gold amphora-shaped pendants from tomb 3 in Mogilanskata tumulus near Vratsa (Torbov 2005) reflect the interactions of local elites with the Macedonian court and novel trends in local goldsmith production.

During this period, jewelry is found primarily in graves without weapons, which are thought to be female burials. The iconography of some artifacts supports this interpretation. Adornments worn by goddesses and noble Thracian women represented on greaves, luxury banquet sets, and frescoes from Thracian tombs correspond to actual finds; for example, the Athena represented on the greaves from the Golyamata Kosmatka tumulus near Shipka, dated to the late fourth or early third century, wears a diadem and earrings; earrings and a luxurious necklace consisting of a band and pendants are depicted on the griffin's-head hilt of the parade sword from the same burial (Kitov 2006, 77–79; Tonkova 2012, 720). In rare cases burial finds suggest that jewelry characteristic of female burials was worn by men as well. In the Malkata tumulus near Shipka, for example, ornaments like earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and a ring with an investiture scene are found alongside scepters and other attributes of royal and priestly authority, which were the exclusive prerogative of males; anthropological analysis of the skeleton recovered from the Malkata tumulus confirms it as a male burial (Kitov 2005, 252).

Further evidence for the repertoire, professional orientation, and location of the Thracian workshops is provided by the numerous instruments for fine metalworking recovered to date, chiefly in northern Thrace. Punches with floral and figural motives, dies and formers, chisels, anvils, and tweezers come from a number of fortified Thracian centers, such as Sveshtari, Dragoevo, Seuthopolis, Ruen, and Pistiros; the Varna, Shumen, and Vratsa Regional Museums of History keep rich collections of instruments that have been found in their respective districts. Thus it is now generally accepted that jewelry workshops functioned in each prominent Thracian center, as well as near Thracian sanctuaries (Tonkova 1994; Tonkova 1999; Antonov 2007).

Many early Hellenistic gold ornaments have been found in the cemeteries of the west Pontic Greek colonies (Minchev 1979; Dimitrova 1989; Pfrommer 1990, FK110; Tonkova 1997b; Tonkova 2002; Oppermann 2004, 202–205). They, together with the north Aegean cities, are among the trendsetters in jewelry fashion in Thrace. Workshops serving the Thracian elite may also

have been stationed there. Each colony maintained its own unique style, despite some common repertoire features, like lion's-head earrings. Local fashion is revealed, for example, in the gold jewelry from the tumular and non-tumular burials of Odessos and its hinterland, including richly ornamented discoid ear-studs, necklaces of composite beads with bull's-head pendants, rings with either female heads or an Eros on the bezel, and discoid brooches; a pyramidal pendant with blue and green filigree enamel is among the earliest examples of polychromous jewelry from Thrace (Tonkova 1997b, 83–87). Sumptuous gold band necklaces with pendants and lion's-head earrings in a set with beaded necklaces have been found in the necropolis of Mesambria (Antikenmuseum Basel 2007, no. 105, 106).

Gold horse trappings from Mezek, Kravevo, and Kavarna, among other locations, all dated ca. 300–250, and recently discovered trappings from Golyamata tumulus near Sveshtari (Gergova 2012), are distinct in Thrace for being made in a “jewelry style” (Tonkova 1997a, 28–29; Tonkova 2011b); the decoration of their ornamented plates utilizes models, motifs, and jewelry techniques that are characteristic of Greek style jewelry, like filigree, granulation, and enamel. Some are comparable to the best Greek examples (Kavarna, Sveshtari), while others have ornaments in local styles (Ivanski, Mezek). Since decorative trappings are not part of the Greek tradition, these examples in gold from Thrace were possibly specially commissioned from the same artisans in the region who made jewelry for Thracian elites (Tonkova 2011b).

The first La Tène imports appear in Thrace at the end of the fourth and during the first half of the third century. The finds of fibulae in early La Tène scheme and distinctive gold ornaments, like the Gorni Cibar torque, as well as pseudo-filigree and pseudo-granulation jewelry in bronze and glass bracelets from northwestern Thrace, are indicative of contacts with Celts and the La Tène world of central Europe (Domaradzki 1980, 1984; Anastassov 2006; Lazarov 2006; Emilov 2010; Vasileva 2012, 5–33; see also [Chapter 25](#)). The cohabitation of Thracians, Celts, and Greeks in northwestern Thrace and in the Kazanlak valley was at the foundation of the cultural synergy of the late fourth and early third century that is reflected in the local styles of personal ornaments (Tonkova 2006).

Categories of jewelry

While breastplates remain in use during the early Hellenistic period, their quality deteriorates (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, 104; Tonkova, 1997a, 22). They are less carefully made and have smaller dimensions; if they are made of gold, it is of thin sheet, but quite often they are rendered in silver; ornamentation is inferior and schematic, while their inclusion in graves, it seems, was symbolic.

The new insignia of Thracian elites were gold wreaths (Tonkova 2013). Wreaths found at Zlatinitsa, Rozovets, and in the Mogilanskata tumulus near Vratsa are associated with rich complexes dated to the middle of the third or fourth quarter of the fourth century and share many common features. The Zlatinitsa wreath consists of olive branches and a Nike, while the Rozovets and Vratsa finds are almost identical laurel wreaths. These were executed in a naturalistic style and are among the most representative examples of Greek jewelry art. Traces of cork or resin on the berries on the laurel branches suggest that the wreaths were safely packed to prevent damage during transportation and may indicate that they were meant to be used by the living. These pieces were likely the work of prominent Aegean ateliers, where gold wreaths were quite popular at this time. Their dissemination in Thrace can be linked to political contacts between local elites and their counterparts outside of Thrace, especially Macedonians. A splendid oak wreath from the tomb of Seuthes III in the Golyamata Kosmatka tumulus near Shipka confirms this proposition. It is comparable to the gold wreath from tomb 2 at Vergina (Kitov 2006, 74), that has recently been dated to the late fourth century (Pfrommer 1990, 259, FK 111; Borza and Palagia 2007). The wreath from the Golyama Kosmatka tumulus furnishes one of many arguments for the high rank of the individual buried there and suggests that he maintained political contacts with the Macedonian court. Imitations of these splendid gold wreaths in bronze and clay are also known.

Ceremonial gold diadems of the late fourth century are rare in Thrace. One gold pediment diadem with figural designs is known from Shapladere near Alexandroupolis (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, no. 249). From inland Thrace the type is only known from the goddesses depicted on the rhyta from the Panagyurishte hoard (Tonkova 2005) and the Athena represented on the greaves from the tomb in the Golyamata Kosmatka tumulus near Shipka (Kitov 2006, 76–77). Another ceremonial type known from the rich tombs of the Macedonian elites, the openwork gold diadem with tendrils, is so far known in Thrace only from a single fine gold branch from the tomb in Momina tumulus, near Bratya Daskalovi, in the Chirpan Heights region (Tonkova 2012).

Hoop earrings with a granulated pyramidal tag remain a popular element of the ceremonial headdress, now larger in size and made of gold or silver. Among the new earring types introduced into Thrace, only the lion's-head hoop earrings are found in large number, equally common in coastal and inland Thrace (Dimitrova 1989). Disc-shaped earrings with rich filigree decoration, typical of the "opulent style" in late fourth-century Greek jewelry, are only found in the city and hinterland of Odessos, where there also was discovered a pair of discoid earrings with a Nike figurine, listed among the masterpieces of its time (Jackson 2011). The splendid "Ionian type" boat-shaped earrings, consisting of an ornamented disk with boat-pendant, a very

popular Greek model of the third and last quarter of the fourth century, are only represented by the gold set from the Mogilanskata tumulus near Vratsa (Tonkova 1997a, 21, 23). Simple necklaces of beads with conical finials are popular at this time, occasionally featuring a central pendant; a wide range of types is known, however, including various pendant, chain, and band necklaces. The golden necklace with amphora pendants covered with very fine granulation discovered in Malkata mogila near Shipka is among the masterpieces of Hellenistic jewelry (e.g., Tonkova 1997a, 23; Tonkova 1998; Tonkova 2005; Kitov 2005; Tonkova 2012). The gold band necklace with spearhead pendants from Mesambria is to date the only example of a late fourth-century Greek “opulent style” necklace.

The complex, composite, silver breast ornament from Bukjovtsi, obviously ceremonial in function, includes hinged fibulae that are typical in Thrace, through which chains pass with human mask-shaped and floral pendants (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, 210–211); it is among the best examples of jewelry from Thrace in the second half of the fourth century (for the date, see Tonkova 1998; Tonkova 2011a) and demonstrates mastery of all fundamental goldsmith techniques: casting, forging, stamping, chiseling, filigree, and granulation. The human mask pendants became a trademark of late fourth-century Thracian jewelry workshops, used commonly for both personal ornaments and horse trappings (Tonkova 1998).

During the early Hellenistic period, torques were still fashionable in Thrace (Ivanova 1988, 10–12). While the torque with terminals bent outward remained in fashion, with attested examples in silver and round in section, a new local type in silver appeared with twisted wires and flat triangular terminals. Standing apart from local finds, the Gorni Tsibar gold torque with spherical terminals and plastic floral decoration in “Waldalgesheim” style is exemplary of the Celtic presence in the Danube basin in the late fourth and early third century (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, no. 254; Domaradski 1984, 139).

There are various styles of Thracian bracelets. Local types are made of silver, while the new Hellenistic models are of gold. From the previous period continues the open hoop bracelet with snake-head finials (Kabile). Silver lamellar bracelets are typical of the Triballian territory in northwestern Thrace (Dimitrova 1966, 120–122; for the date, see Tonkova 1998, 750–751; Tonkova 2011a, 191). The gold snake-bracelets from Kralevo and Aytos in eastern Thrace are realistically shaped and reflect Greek influence; to this group belong also the bracelets ending with animal heads (Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, no. 252, 193; Ginev 1983; Tonkova 1997a, 24). Recently, a specific group of ornaments, cast in bronze in a peculiar pseudo-filigree and pseudo-granulation technique, was identified in northeastern Bulgaria; such finds are characteristic of the Celtic cultural circle (Anastassov 2006; Tonkova 2006). Possibly associated with the Celtic presence in the region are also

some distinctive glass bracelets (Domaradski 1984, 140).

Early Hellenistic rings are of two types: with engravings or with figural motifs in relief on the bezel. While the former was typical throughout Thrace, the latter was particularly characteristic of Odessos, where examples with Eros and head of Aphrodite have been found. The homogeneous group of gold signet rings depicting a horseman or investiture scene remained restricted to Odrysian territory; such scenes are also found on the rings from Glozhene, Brezovo, Rozovets, and Malkata tumulus near Shipka, and on wall paintings in Thracian tombs (e.g., Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, no. 207, 209; Tonkova 1997a, 21, 24; Kitov 2005). New motifs gained popularity, including sphinxes, snakes, griffins, tortoises, and grapes (Kitov 2006, 93). Engraved iron and bronze rings were also very popular, particularly in Odrysian territories, and feature Greek deities like Hermes, Heracles, Eros, Artemis, Phosphoros, allegorical figures, as well as a satyr and a maenad; animal images were also common. The themes and ornaments are characteristic of Greek jewelry craft. Some, executed in the refined Greek style (e.g., Topalchane: Dimitrova 2008), were imported, while others were locally made; such rings were equally characteristic of the colonies (Mladenova 1963, 300) and the inland centers (Ogdenova-Marinova 1984, 164–165), and illustrate the spread of Greek culture among the local population (Tonkova forthcoming a).

During the early Hellenistic period, Thracian-type fibulae became extremely popular. They are both an accessory to clothing and an ornament, and secured the attachment of chains with pendants. They were made chiefly in bronze, but often also in silver; numerous variations appeared throughout Thrace, even in some Greek colonies like Apollonia (Domaradski 2000; Vasileva 2012, 5–22). At the same time, La Tène types of bilateral spiral fibulae began to be imported and made in local workshops (Domaradzki 1980; Domaradski 1984; Anastassov 2006; Vasileva 2012, 5–33). Hinged fibulae also became more popular (Vasic 1999, 114–115, type Vb, c; Vasileva 2012, 35); six fibulae of this type served to attach the ceremonial ornament from Bukjovtsi hoard ([Figure 15.2](#)) (Dimitrova 1966). They were less common as burial finds. Gold buttons and ornamented gold plates were sporadically found.

15.6 The Middle and Late Hellenistic period, ca. 250–1

The development of the jewelry fashion in the Greek colonies and inland Thrace diverged after the middle of the third century.

The west Pontic coast: assemblages and general characteristics

The jewelry fashion of the colonies follows broader trends in Greek jewelry at this time, with the polychrome style becoming prevalent during the middle Hellenistic period and dominant during the late Hellenistic period. This development can be seen in the fine gold ornaments from the cemeteries of Odessos, Mesambria, and Apollonia, ca. 250–150 (Dimitrova 1989; Pfrommer 1990, FK 95–98; Tonkova 1997b; Tonkova 2002; Oppermann 2004, 202–205). Exceptionally evocative jewelry has been recovered from rich tumulus burials from Sinemorets and Anchialo on the Black Sea coast (Agre 2009; Balabanov 1976).

Inlay was more common in the middle Hellenistic period; for example, inlaid cabochons or stringed multicolored beads of carnelian, amethyst, garnet, or even colored glass became typical of the jewelry fashion of Mesambria and Apollonia. In the following centuries the style finds its full expression and leads to the domination of colored elements over the gold base or frame. First-century earrings with pendants of colorful stones from Anchialo are characteristic of this new style (Tonkova 2002; Tonkova forthcoming b).

Despite sharing some features, the repertoire of each town was distinct. Among these, the jewelry fashion of Mesambria ca. 250–150 is most impressive. A strikingly rich mid-third-century burial complex discovered in 2009 is illustrative: numerous gold pieces with incrustation and enamel are featured, including fine gold diadems with detailed enamel ornament, gem rings with representations of Aphrodite and Athena, and a chain band with Heracles knot (Kiyashkina, Bozkova, and Marvakov 2012, nos. 63–73). These finds are analogous to jewelry complexes discovered in rich burials of the Macedonian elite and suggest that these Mesambrians possessed comparable wealth and status. Most models recur and define the specific jewelry style of this Greek colony, such as, for example: earrings and chains with lion-griffin's head; earrings with a maenad head or with a centaur's forepart; rings with an elaborated shield and cabochon; original spiral rings; and gold foil replicas of "solid" ornaments (Frel 1963; Venedikov and Gerasimov 1973, nos. 188, 190, 195, 201, 202, 221; Pfrommer 1990, 245, FK 95–98; Tonkova 1997b, 88–92; Tonkova 2002; Oppermann 2004, 202–205). According to my recent observations, Mesambria was not only an importer of products of renowned workshops, but also one of the leading jewelry centers of its time. Comparison with the jewelry style from Odessos reveals that the latter was more conservative and avoided the use of polychromy (Tonkova 1997b, 87).

The affluence, artistic taste, and preferences of Thracian elites in the coastal area rival those of the richest Greek colonists. For example, a grave found recently in a tumulus in Sinemorets, dated 250–200, included gold jewelry with polychromous decoration that featured incusted elements and filigree in a fine Greek style. The models are Greek and include fittings from a diadem with incusted gold elements, earrings with a figurine of Nike on a chariot,

and a necklace of bull's-head beads (Agre 2009). The magnificent gold adornments of a "Thracian noblewoman" from Anchialo provide a further illustration of the second- to first-century jewelry fashion along the coast (Balabanov 1976; Tonkova 1997b, 92–93; Tonkova forthcoming b).

The west Pontic coast: categories of jewelry

The diadems from Mesembria and Sinemorets are made of separate gold elements with polychromous decoration: each is unique. The Mesambria diadem consists of oval, round, and rectangular gold plates, decorated with inlaid cabochons and fine filigree enamel, combined with other miniature details like rosettes and diamonds with blue and green enamel (Kiyashkina et al. 2012, nos. 68–70). The Sinemorets diadem features a central rectangular plate with floral ornaments shaped by filigree wire and other round gold elements with rosettes and inlaid cabochons. The diadem was commissioned for the wife of a prominent Thracian aristocrat, as suggested by the inscription in Greek traced with filigree wire on the central plate: according to the reading, "[the goldsmith] Demetrios made it for [a Thracian woman named] Kortozous" (Agre 2009).

The animal-head hoop earrings show a clearly discernible transformation. Lion's-head earrings remained in circulation, but were now reinterpreted in novel local variations, and many other motifs also appeared; for example, a local variant with tall filigree cones appears in Odessos in the second half of the third and the beginning of the second century. New original types also appear; these include: hoop earrings with a head of a maenad, or a lion-griffin with the forepart of a centaur, or full figures of a sphynx, or a Nike in a chariot; and earrings with applied cabochon cells and glass pendants on a hinge (Tonkova 1997b, 87–93).

Most necklaces dated to 250–100 were based on older models, but employed new, diverse elements and decorative techniques. Use of multicolored ornament, not uncommon in the mid-third century, became prevalent during the second century. Bead necklaces remained popular ca. 250–200 with fine examples from Mesambria and Anchialo. Band and chain necklaces were popular as well during the third and second century and developed in novel ways. Odessos, for example, has produced gold necklaces, which may have been elements of a breast ornament, consisting of two braided bands with a central medallion of an Eros head and Aphrodite and Artemis busts in high relief; while the high relief busts were characteristic of the late third and early second century, the Odessos model has no exact parallel.

Several types of ring were prominent in the late third to early second century: the bezel of one features a cabochon, while the other displays a bust of Aphrodite with Erotes. The gold gem rings with depictions of Athena and Aphrodite recently discovered in Mesambria are at present exceptional

(Kiyashkina et al. 2012, nos. 72–73). The style of the representations and the precision of the craftsmanship suggest manufacture in prominent Greek workshops; exact parallels are known from the famous tomb of the Erotes from Eretria. Snake rings, such as the remarkable gold ring with a Ketos head with stone incrustations, are distinctive of Mesambria (Tonkova 1997b, 88; Marazov 1998, 126, 127).

Also peculiar to Mesambrian ateliers were brooches of decorated foil, pinned to the dress by fibulae. These portray a Medusa head and a winged bolt, and feature filigree thread ornaments and incrustated cabochons. One gold brooch is decorated with figural motifs rendered in repoussé, while others are cast in silver and bronze. Although the motifs used are common to Greek art, the Mesambrian adornments find no exact parallels outside of the town and can be considered a product of the local jewelry school (Tonkova 1997b, 89).

Inland Thrace

The jewelry fashion of inland Thrace reflects the region's cultural difference from the Black Sea coast. After the mid-third century, when the influence from La Tène culture predominated over Greek aesthetics, gold ornaments became exceptional. Goldsmith workshops continued to operate in the old Getic and Odrysian centers, where original local models were created. Local variations of animal-head earrings, like lion's-head hoop earrings with tall filigree cones, are known from Odessos, Madara, and Dalgopol in northeastern Thrace and may reflect Celtic influence (Dimitrova 1989, 9–11; Tonkova 2006, 267–269).

Goldsmith workshops functioned also in the Seuthopolis area; among its products are a fine pair of gold fibulae in middle La Tène patterns dated to the late third century found in the Seuthopolis necropolis (Emilov 2010, 76, fig. 3). A Seuthopolis workshop may also have produced the unique gold fibula with light green and dark blue enamel found in Sashova tumulus near Shipka, dated to the early second century (Marazov 1998, 102; Tonkova 2002, 107), which is the only example of polychromous decoration known from inland Thrace at this time; it combines the shape of a middle La Tène-type fibula with typically Greek decorative techniques.

A remarkable find of silver appliqués for horse trappings, from Ravnogor in the central Rhodope Mountains, features busts of Athena, Artemis, winged Dionysus, and Aphrodite (Marazov 1998, 132–135); the find indicates close interactions with Hellenistic jewelry traditions of the early second century. Their style is comparable in some details to the famous gold ornaments for a sophisticated hair-dress from the so-called Carpenisi hoard in Thessaly, believed to be the product of Macedonian workshops; items like the Ravnogor appliqués may have been produced by such a workshop for Thracian elites.

After the mid-third century, gold jewelry and Greek-style ornaments of the

Ravnogor type became exceptional. Jewelry fashion was shaped rather by the development of traditional forms, mostly under La Tène influence, and informed by the increasing number of La Tène imports, primarily fibulae. The Thracian-type fibula was replaced by fibulae in the La Tène pattern, typical of La Tène C and D. New types of torques and bracelets appeared. As a rule, the adornments of this period were in silver and bronze, while fibulae were worked in iron (Domaradski 1984, 138–142).

During the late Hellenistic period, jewelry fashion was substantially transformed. Silver items, discovered as part of hoards or as single accidental finds, spread during the mid-second to the first century, mostly in northern Thrace (e.g., Marazov 1998, 234–237; Tonkova 2011a). There is an entirely new repertoire of forms, including, for example: snake-head torques; collier chains with cylindrical ends; open, massive bracelets; closed bracelets and hoops with overlapping ends; large spirals with bunched snake heads for terminals; and fibulae with diamond shaped bow, some of which are typical of the so-called Dacian hoards of silver jewelry objects (Horedt 1973; Rustoiu 1996). Most, however, have specific characteristics that distinguish them from finds north of the Danube. The workshops operating south of the Danube constitute a discrete group, awaiting examination, yet their autonomous style is obvious; they should be regarded as actively contributing to the formation of the La Tène repertoire of forms and its extension into much of Europe.

One further trait must be noted for the late Hellenistic period in Thrace. Imported Roman jewels, of the Graeco-Roman and Italo-Roman jewelry craft style begin to appear during the first century, including objects with polychromatic elements dominating over gold. After a gap of four centuries, gem jewelry reappeared in inland Thrace – products of late Hellenistic and early Republican glyptics.

Translated by V. Bineva

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Notes

- 1 All ancient dates BCE, unless otherwise noted.
- 2 Many factors hinder determining the sex of buried individuals. Most often, the preserved evidence is simply not probative and earlier excavations were not accompanied by osteological analysis. Thus, associated finds, especially the presence or absence of weapons, have traditionally been used to identify male or female burials.

Chapter 16

The Pottery of Ancient Thrace

Anelia Bozkova

16.1 Introduction

The pottery design and production of ancient Thrace reflect specific historical moments and change dynamically in accordance with the general tendencies of the ancient Mediterranean world. The present review follows these developments primarily on the basis of archaeological finds from contemporary Bulgaria and ranges chronologically from the Late Bronze Age to the late Hellenistic period, with an emphasis on the late Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods.¹

16.2 The Pottery of the Late Bronze Age

It is currently believed that the formation of the Thracian ethnos began in the Late Bronze Age (seventeenth–twelfth century) (Mihailov 1991, 595–596). Material evidence from this period is supplemented by early written sources (Velkov 1971). The process of ethnic consolidation may also be reflected in contemporary pottery assemblages. Certain features of pottery production, design, and decoration persist throughout Thrace during the Early Iron Age (Nikov 2001, 71). The Late Bronze Age was also a time of intensified connections between the inhabitants of Thrace and more complex states in the north Aegean, Anatolia, and the Peloponnese. The tradition of importing foreign pottery, which is characteristic of later Thracian history, has its roots in this period.

Hand-made pottery

Late Bronze Age pottery in Thrace has been the subject of many studies, which recognize both a trend towards unification and the establishment of regional specificities. Key features of local production are: clay mixed with assorted inclusions, like organics, grog, and quartz; modeling by hand, most likely in a domestic setting; and the presence of slip or the partial burnishing of the surface on some objects. Pottery can be classified by thickness of the wall, shape, and presumed function; each group is characterized by a distinct decorative scheme and principles. The most popular forms include: bowls of various types, both shallow and deep; jugs and pitchers; kantharoid vessels; paired vessels, like salt cellars; cups; and storage vessels (Leshtakov 1990; 2006, 189). There are two principal ornamental techniques: modeling or molding; and incised decoration, with varied motifs arranged in diverse

patterns and combinations. Researchers have relied on morphological traits and decoration as criteria for distinguishing regional pottery groups, their origins, and ethno-cultural interactions. Certain traits of the pottery assemblages of the Mesta (anc. Nestos) river valley in southern Thrace tie them to the Aegean-Anatolian cultural sphere, which would remain the most notable influence on Thracian culture throughout these and the following centuries (Nikov 2001, 71; Leshtakov 2006, 208). Additionally, the pottery of the Rhodope mountains and the Struma (anc. Strymon) river valley in southwestern Thrace indicates influence from the large centers in the northwestern Aegean, the Vardar valley, and the Thermaic Gulf, like Kastanas and Assiros, both in the Thessaloniki regional unit of Greece (Alexandrov 2002, 79–81). A distinctive group, comprised of finds from the cemeteries at Baley and Orsoya in northwestern Thrace, is associated with the so-called “Encrusted Pottery Culture” of the western Lower Danube (Shalganova 1995).

Wheel-made pottery

The archaeological assemblages of Late Bronze Age Thrace contain few wheel-made fragments, all of which are considered imports. Some are decorated in the Peloponnesian or the north Aegean fashion of the styles of the Mycenaean culture. Fragments of Mycenaean origin or of “Mycenaean type” appear restricted to sites in central and southern Thrace and have been discovered at: “Kaymenska Chuka” near Blagoevgrad in the Struma river valley (Stefanovich and Bankoff 1998); Koprivlen (Gotse Delchev district) in the Mesta river valley (Alexandrov 2002, 73–74); Parvomay (Plovdiv district) in the Maritsa (anc. Hebros) river valley; and Drama (Yambol district) in the Tundzha (anc. Tonzos) river valley (Karadzhinov 2010, 158–161). Such fragments serve as evidence of direct contacts with the large production and trade centers in the Aegean throughout the Late Bronze Age.

16.3 The Pottery of the Early Iron Age (Geometric and Archaic Age)

Hand-made pottery

During the Early Iron Age (eleventh/tenth–sixth century) hand-made pottery remains the predominant type utilized in the everyday life of Thrace.

Domestic production still seems prevalent, though some researchers (Nikov 2000, 9) believe that specialized production of vessels with stamped motifs and wheel-made vessels may begin at the end of the period. As a whole, the Early Iron Age (EIA) pottery assemblage is characterized by new forms and decorative schemes. According to some, the new ceramic production has no discernible link to the previous age (Gotsev 2010, 74), while others find

numerous resemblances indicating continuity of type and decoration. The EIA has been divided into early (eleventh/tenth–ninth century) and late (eighth–sixth century) periods on the basis of decorative style. These stylistic trends, common throughout Thrace, find specific expression at the regional and local level, particularly in southern Thrace and the lower Danube. Early EIA pottery is characterized by relatively sparse ornamentation, as well as greater use of flutes and of the circle motif (multiple circles) in stamped decoration. Later EIA pottery presents a more sophisticated and richer ornamental repertoire. In general, EIA production is marked by a growing standardization and generalization that extends throughout much of Thrace. The basic forms are: bowls (shallow and deep); cups; kantharoid vessels; amphoroid vessels; and large storage vessels. The basic decorative types include channels, stamps, and both plastic and incised decoration. The typical motifs include circles with tangents and S-shaped ornament (Nikov 1995; Nekhrizov 2006). Vessel shape and decoration provide the basic criteria for determining chronology and identifying developments specific to individual regions as well as cultural contacts between regions (e.g., Nikov 2011). The hand-made pottery demonstrates a close resemblance with similar artifacts of the Aegean-Anatolian area, such as those from Troy VII, for example. Decoration, particularly stamp decoration, suggests direct inspiration from the decorative scheme of the Mediterranean geometric style that developed in the large centers for wheel-made production (Nikov 2001, 71–72).

Imported and local wheel-made pottery

From the eighth to sixth century, some regions of southern Thrace yield archaeological assemblages with evidence of wheel-made pottery. Some of this material suggests the existence of long-distance trade, like the seventh-century east Greek bird bowl sherds from Koprivlen (Bozkova 2002a, fig. 47.1) and from sites in the Yambol district on the Tundzha river (Bakardzhiev 2010, figs. 3.1–3.2). Another pottery group consists of vessels decorated in sub-Protogeometric or Geometric style and produced in north Aegean workshops or locally. According to current scholarship (Karadzhinov 2010, 158, 168), such imports begin to arrive in the Thracian hinterland, north of the Aegean coast, in the eighth century, before the end of the Geometric period. Two large regions of inland Thrace, perhaps as a consequence of their more advanced economic development and location, were exposed to Greek styles and developed their own imitative production.

The first of these regions is framed by the middle and lower reaches of the Struma and Mesta rivers; it is culturally and economically bound to the Thracian Gulf centers and to Thasos and the Thasian peraia (see [Chapter 19](#)). Within this region, eighth- and seventh-century local vessels with north Aegean-inspired geometric decoration have been found at Koprivlen near Gotse Delchev and at Mikrevo near Sandanski. The finds emulate a northern

Aegean pottery style, known variously as “silvered ware,” “local subgeometric ware,” “Olynthus style pottery,” or “Chalcidian style 1 ware” (on this ware cf. Gimatzidis 2010, 226–228; Bozkova 2002a, 133–145); they show technological, typological, and decorative correspondences with pottery from the Thermaic gulf and Chalcidice peninsula, and find particularly close comparanda in assemblages from Thasos, Argilos, Olynthus, and Sindos (Gimatzidis 2010, 226–252, figs. 64–73). This pottery style is characterized by a comparatively rich repertoire of both closed (e.g., pithoi and pithos-like amphorae, neck-handled amphorae, jugs, and stamnoi) and open forms (e.g., cups and deep bowls). The decoration, which is the unifying element for this ceramic group, is painted in a specific color range with various shades of reddish-violet and reddish-brown color; it consists of geometric motifs either restricted to particular sections or quite often covering the entire surface. Applied carelessly, the ornament is most commonly organized in bands framed by horizontal lines. The basic motifs include: horizontal lines of different width that are used as an independent motif or as margins; intersecting horizontal and vertical lines; concentric circles; bands of different width, comprised of wavy lines of assorted thickness and amplitude; net-like ornament; groups of small bows; and grouped dots. Despite the remarkable similarity with the north Aegean finds, the Koprivlen and Mikrevo assemblages demonstrate some distinct forms suggestive of regional preferences and local production. This hypothesis is also supported by the discovery at Koprivlen of a stone pottery kiln that preserves sherds of wheel-made late Archaic red-slipped amphorae (Bozkova and Delev 2011, 22–23, figs. 12–13); the find confirms local production of fine wheel-made pottery prior to the end of the Archaic period.

The second cultural zone with finds of wheel-made pottery with geometric motifs is located in the middle Maritsa river valley, north of the modern Bulgaria/Turkey/Greece border. Pit sanctuaries near Svilengrad and Simeonovgrad produced late Geometric and Archaic imports, including some sherds of G 2–3 North Aegean and Aeolian pottery (eighth–seventh century) (Karadzhinov 2010, 161–163).

16.4 Late Archaic and Classical Pottery

The onset of the Classical Age marks a period of substantial change in the nature and repertoire of the pottery assemblages from Thrace. These transformations begin during the sixth century, when new pottery categories appear and gradually become predominant in the region.

Wheel-made monochrome ware

Wheel-made monochrome pottery (gray, buff) is the most abundant category of table ware in ancient Thrace. There is a long established consensus that it

appears and develops under the influence of external models (originally from Aeolia and Ionia in Asia Minor and the east Greek islands, later Attic) and remains almost foreign to the local EIA traditions.

This category is comprised of wheel-made vessels made of fine, purified clay, tempered with minute quantities of mica, quartz, or other, barely noticeable inclusions. A fixed element is the glazed surface, usually glossy, and gray to black in color (hence the popular tag “gray pottery”); yet a buff-brown surface color is not unusual. There is no recognized repertoire distinction between the two basic tones and no indication of chronological disparity between the two groups. In the present state of research, it seems that the surface color is a matter of fashion and produced by deliberate action during firing.

Monochrome ware objects have been identified in the Greek colonies of the Thracian coast of the Black Sea and in all more prominent sites of inland Thrace. The earliest finds come from Histria (Alexandrescu 1977; Lungu 2009) and Apollonia Pontica (Nikov 2012), both on the western coast of the Black Sea, where, under the influence of Aeolian monochrome and painted Ionian ware, the mass production of this category began probably as early as the end of the seventh or the beginning of the sixth century. The characteristic forms of monochrome ware were introduced from the Black Sea and north Aegean coasts into the Thracian hinterland by the sixth century, where they became well established and were broadly distributed (Nikov 1999; Bouzek, Domaradzki, and Domaradzka 2010). Of great significance for the study of monochrome ware in Thrace are artifacts found in the cultural deposits of settlements, most commonly those occupying a high rank in the settlement system. Examples are abundant, although few have been published (Chichikova 1984, 31–48; Kisiov 2004, 57–61; Bouzek and Domaradzka 2010; Bozkova and Vasileva 2010). Other important contexts for monochrome ware are cemeteries, especially those containing tumuli, and pit complexes; these contexts preserve more intact shapes and offer chronological reference points for the development of individual forms (e.g., Georgieva and Bachvarov 1994; Bozkova and Nikov 2010, figs. 7–8; Kamisheva 2010, 194–196; Tonkova 2010, 207–208).

The available data puts the peak distribution of wheel-made gray/buff monochrome ware in inland Thrace between the sixth and fourth centuries. A limited number of shapes remain in production during the early Hellenistic period, but they are gradually replaced by a new repertoire, mostly of black-color vessels. The chronology of the monochrome artifacts from Thrace points to a pronounced asynchronism between similar pottery shapes originating from Thrace and those from northern Asia Minor; centuries after their original introduction, the early Aeolian models are conserved locally and remain in use even after they have fallen out of use in their native Aeolia (Bozkova and Nikov 2009). A good illustration of this trend is provided by a monochrome vessel found in a tumulus near Simeonovgrad, Haskovo region,

dated to the first half of the fifth century; this deep bowl with horizontal handles (calyx) is the only example of this shape rendered in gray (Bozkova and Vasileva 2010, 227, figs. 7–8). The shape is very close to some Chiote calyxes of the late seventh century, which suggests that fifth-century and later Thracian production of monochrome ware vessels was based on older models. This repertoire, which certainly reached Thrace complete in the second half of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth century, most likely took root and was maintained in the Greek colonies along the Aegean and Black Sea coasts of Thrace. The appearance in bulk of wheel-made monochrome ware in the south Thracian hinterland in the early fifth century can be explained as a result of the consolidation of the Odrysian state and rapid social and economic development in Odrysian territory, including increasing craft specialization. Though no monochrome ware workshops or kilns have been discovered, the presence of a long series of many forms of monochrome ware and their wide distribution throughout inland and coastal Thrace suggest a possible local origin. Additional support for this hypothesis is offered by the discovery of vessels with production defects that had been deposited as wasters in a pit complex near Malko Tranovo, Chirpan region (Bozkova and Nikov 2009, fig. 2). It is reasonable to assume both that a large portion of the vessels were produced in workshops situated in the vicinity of the large urban or cult centers in Thrace and that the repertoire and technological parameters of production were borrowed from workshops in the west Pontic or the Aegean colonies.

The monochrome ware repertoire was to a large degree established already in the late Archaic period on the basis of models borrowed from Asia Minor. The later innovations, most of which find comparanda in Greek black-glaze pottery, employ a limited number of shapes, possibly the result of selective production. Overall it seems that the repertoire is standardized and uniform throughout the region, with relatively rare local specifics, like cups with biconical body and high handle, which are distributed in northern Thrace and along the Black Sea coast but absent south of the Stara Planina.

Shallow and deep bowls with narrow or high foot and inverted rim are traditional in Thrace. This is a simple, conventional conical shape, inherited, according to some, from the local EIA pottery repertoire (Bozkova and Vasileva 2010, figs. 2–3). Incised lines below the rim are encountered in single cases. The shape cannot be assigned a specific date, except when found as part of an assemblage, as it demonstrates no development over time. In addition to the late Archaic and Classical finds, morphologically identical specimens are also recovered in early Hellenistic contexts.

An example of another open form is the small shallow bowl, which, given its dimensions (diameter less than 10 cm), likely had functions specific to daily and ritual use as, for example, in the case of the Greek salt cellars (Bozkova and Vasileva 2010, figs. 2–3).

Bowls with handles at the rim (*lekanai*) are one of the most typical shapes of the west Pontic and Thracian repertoire (Bozkova and Vasileva 2010, figs. 4–5). Finds of this kind in the Black Sea zone are known since the seventh and sixth centuries, where they probably represent Aeolian influences, while the artifacts from inland Thrace date mostly to 550–350. There are variations of the basic shape, but it is very hard to trace typological development through time, since they all share similar morphological parameters indicative of a standardized and conservative production.

Another type of open form, bowls with handles, also finds broad distribution both in the Thracian interior (Bozkova and Vasileva 2010, fig. 6) and along the Black Sea coast (Alexandrescu 1972, fig. 5.2; Nikov 2012, figs. 10.4–5, 31.4–6). These are deep, conical shapes with inverted rim, beneath which are attached handles that are round in cross-section. The earliest examples of this form from inner Thrace are dated to the late sixth and early fifth century; it is common in the region throughout the entire Classical period.

The krater with bell-shaped body on low foot is among the most popular shapes of the Thracian repertoire and was often employed as an urn. Across Thrace it is most commonly found in two variants: one with short cylindrical neck; the other with conical upper body (Bozkova and Vasileva 2010, fig. 9). Both versions seem to have coexisted, at least during the Classical period. While the shape appears quite conservative in development, these kraters tend to progress from a fuller, squat body to more elongated proportions; the evolution is gradual and slow, but accelerates during the Hellenistic period. The kraters appear as early as the late seventh and sixth century in settlements such as Histria and Apollonia, possibly inspired by east Greek models, and figure prominently in the Thracian repertoire until the late Hellenistic period.

Flat-bottom serving amphorae are also well established in the everyday life of Thracian consumers, enjoying mass production (as indicated by specimens with production defects from Malko Tranovo) and high diversity. These shapes find very close comparanda in Archaic painted amphorae from Asia Minor (Nikov 2005).

Like the *lekanai* and kraters, cups with biconical body and high handle are a monochrome ware group of major significance in Thrace (Bozkova and Vasileva 2010, figs. 11–12). Some believe that cups of this type are rooted in the traditions of local EIA pottery; arguments supporting their origin in pottery shapes of the late Geometric north Aegean repertoire have also been put forward (Bozkova and Delev 2011, 19, fig. 7). Until the mid-fourth century, several basic versions circulate, after which time they are replaced by jugs with more gentle curves and a handle that does not rise above the rim.

Cups with S-profile body and a single handle, raised slightly above the rim, are especially popular from the beginning of the fifth century, in both the west Pontic colonies and inland Thrace. A variant with perforations occurs and was

used as a strainer. This is a constituent form of the Aeolian repertoire, from which it was likely introduced into the Black Sea region during the late Archaic period. Cups of this form were used mostly during the fifth and fourth century, with single finds reported also from early Hellenistic assemblages.

Decoration on Thracian monochrome ware is simple, quite rare, and duplicates that which is employed in the Aeolian models. There are two basic decorative techniques – modeled and incised (Bozkova and Nikov 2009). Incised waves are most common, normally positioned below the rim, but also in other body sections; other applications, like horns, attached upon or below the rim, are less frequent.

Late Archaic painted pottery

In the final years of the Archaic period, inland Thrace received vessels from east Greek (mostly Ionian) and Corinthian workshops, which had been well established several decades earlier in the west Pontic colonies' markets. Such pottery tends to be found at sites near the Black Sea littoral, for example in the area of Karnobat, Burgas region (Georgieva 2009; Georgieva and Nikov 2010); by the end of the Archaic period, however, there is distribution further inland to sites in the Stara Zagora and Chirpan regions (Kamisheva 2010).

Black- and red-figure and black-glaze pottery of the Classical period

The group of vessels dated to the Classical period is large and evocative; it includes Greek vases of two principal types: vessels with figural (black- and red-figure) decoration; and vessels dressed entirely in black glaze.

Greek apoikiai ("colonies") on the north Aegean and Black Sea coasts provide the most numerous finds. From the Black Sea littoral zone, outside the colonies, significant concentrations of Greek pottery are found at sites on Burgas Bay, like Debelt (Burgas municipality) and the Pobeda quarter of Burgas, which served as distribution centers (Giuzelev 2008, 187–192).

Imported pottery is found in typologically and functionally diverse archaeological sites in the Thracian interior. Most prominent among these are the cemeteries with rich and lavish burial inventory. Emblematic finds include those from: the Duvanli and Brezovo (Plovdiv region) cemeteries; the tumuli at Dalboki (Stara Zagora region) and Staro Selo (Sliven region); and more recently from sites in Karnobat municipality (Georgieva 2009; Georgieva and Nikov 2010) and at Golemani (Veliko Tarnovo region) (Tsurov 2008, 61–62, 77–79), among many others (Reho 1990; Lazarov 2003). The cult sites, both sanctuaries and especially the pit fields, also contribute significantly to the collection of painted and black-glaze vessels from inland Thrace. The most

striking examples come from the complexes near Malko Tranovo (Bozkova and Nikov 2010; Tonkova 2010) and Stara Zagora (Kamischeva 2010). Excavated settlement sites in inland Thrace have also yielded significant quantities of imports, including pottery. Such imports are characteristic of settlements with sophisticated political and economic functions, like: sites with so-called “royal residence” type structures; the central settlements of proto-urban or urban type; and emporia. The list of such sites includes the settlements: near Vasil Levski, Karlovo municipality (Kisyov 2004); near Krastevich, Hisar municipality (unpublished); near Vetren, Pazardzhik municipality – Pistiros (Archibald 2002; Bouzek 2002); and near Simeonovgrad, Haskovo district (unpublished).

Earlier scholarship has established the prominence of the Attic school, or of workshops developing under Attic influence, within Thrace. The finds are, with few exceptions, mass, standardized products of limited aesthetic value; no masterpieces of the principal Attic painters or schools have been recognized. More remarkable for their artistry are vessels of the early Classical period found in some very rich Thracian burial complexes. Notable examples include: the black-figure amphorae from the Mushovitsa tumulus (Filov 1934, 90–93); the red-figure hydria from Bashova tumulus (Alexandrescu 1976; Reho 1990; Lazarov 2003; Hermary 2010); the red-figure hydria from the Kaloyanovo-Chernozem tumulus (Kisyov 2004, 28–33); the red-figure amphora and pelike from Brezovo of the second and third quarter of the fifth century (Reho 1990, 152, 153; Lazarov 2003, no. 19, 28); and all fifth-century finds from the Duvanli necropolis (Filov 1934, 39–153 and *passim*). Such finds can be regarded as luxury objects, perhaps specially commissioned from renowned painters and workshops. Other, more widely attested vessels probably arrived in Thrace as a result of regular trade, such as: the “Haimon” group skyphoi of the early Classical period (from sites near or on the Black Sea and in Plovdiv and Chirpan regions); the “Fat boys” skyphoi of the fourth century (from multiple settlement and burial assemblages); as well as the pottery assemblages from specific settlement sites like Pistiros (Archibald 2002) and Simeonovgrad (unpublished).

A closer look at the forms reveals a greater diversity of shapes in the coastal sites than in the hinterland. During the early Classical period there is a preference for large forms for the storage and mixing of liquids, such as: column kraters, which are particularly widespread; amphorae; and hydrias. Among the smaller forms, cups of various types (“stemless,” skyphoi) are widely attested, as are, more rarely, the “St. Valentine” type kantharoi (Bozkova 2004b, 55–56, figs. 10–11, with literature) and lekythoi of various shapes. During the fourth century bell kraters and the skyphoi receive wide distribution and are found together with lekythoi and pelikai (Reho 1990; Lazarov 2003).

With respect to iconography, there is a preference in Thrace for scenes

expressing religious ideas and funerary beliefs (Reho 1990; Hermary 2010).

Several regions of Thrace are especially rich with painted pottery in the Classical period: the lowlands of upper Thrace, with microregions around Pistiros; along the rivers Pyasuchnik, Stryama, and Rahmanliyska; between Chirpan and Stara Zagora; along the Maritsa river, generally overlapping with Haskovo region; and in the Nova Zagora-Sliven-Karnobat region, where finds are dated to ca. 450–300. Classical Greek pottery is rare in northern Thrace, although painted and black-glaze vessels of early Classical date are known from the burial complex at Golemani (Veliko Tarnovo district) (Tsuov 2008, 61–62, 77–79).

A total of 60 shapes of black-glaze pottery are known from the Black Sea colonies and the hinterland, of which 56 find comparanda in the Athenian agora, and four have a peculiar, atypical body morphology (Bozkova 2010a; Bozkova 2010b). Drinking cups, often as an element of a drinking set, are especially prominent within the repertoire of preferred forms; the observation is not biased by the overwhelming number of finds recovered from cemeteries. In addition to cemetery contexts, cups monopolize the pottery repertoire of sites characterized by negative contexts, or pits, like the complex near Malko Tranovo; the pottery forms dominating this site are not exceptional, but fit well into the context of Mediterranean traditions, in which cups are prominent at cult sites.

In the early Classical period, cups on high foot with two symmetrical handles, commonly known as stemmed cups or kylikes, appear and become popular in the Greek apoikiai on the Black Sea coast of Thrace, as in Athens and other Mediterranean cities. The earliest examples of this type, “cup C,” on a shorter stem, dated to the last quarter of the sixth century, mark the earliest Attic imports and were reproduced in local workshops (probably in Mesambria) in gray monochrome versions. Mass production of the “stemless” cup on low foot begins in the colonies soon after. The widespread introduction of black-glaze pottery into inland Thrace dates to the second quarter of the fifth century (though there are individual earlier finds), but, despite this relatively early date, high-stem cups never achieved the status of desired trade objects in the local Thracian setting. Instead, cups with short foot of the “inset lip” type (otherwise known as “Castulo cup”) are preferred, the majority of which can be dated by associated finds to ca. 450–400 (Bozkova 2004a). Such cups are a fixed element of rich graves, where they often accompany a larger painted wine container and one or more metal vessels, comprising a funerary set. The best examples of such sets have been excavated at Duvanli, Dalboki (Stara Zagora district), and Staro selo. In these burial sites the black-glaze cups function as luxury objects and mark social status (Bozkova 2004a; Bozkova 2010b). Stemless inset lip cups are discontinued or fall out of popularity ca. 425, replaced by the skyphos (primarily the Attic version, with Bolsal and Pheidias forms prominent). The beginning of the fourth century is marked by

the widespread use of skyphoi and heavy-walled cups in the Black Sea colonies (especially Apollonia) and their immediate hinterland (Burgas, Debelt). Other types of cups are only sporadically documented in the local Thracian assemblages, and in small quantities. Within this group, the Pheidias shape cups seem to have been slightly more popular and have analogues in silver and bronze vessels as well as in local grey monochrome imitations; finds are reported from: Odessos; Apollonia; and sites in the Plovdiv, Chirpan, and Nova Zagora regions. Although black-glaze jugs are quite common in Apollonia's cemeteries (Ivanov 1963, 153–156), in inland Thrace they are almost nonexistent, where grey monochrome ware jugs, as well as elegant metal jugs, were preferred. Small cups and bowls without handle, salt containers, and lamps are also rare in inland Thrace.

16.5 Pottery of the Hellenistic Period

During the Hellenistic period, Thracian pottery complexes undergo a dramatic change and include styles and groups with marked geographical specificity. Several groups are prominent in Thrace.

Grey (buff-brown) monochrome ware

During the early Hellenistic period this group enjoys its last decades of popularity in Thrace. Pottery assemblages like that from Seuthopolis belong to the true monochrome ware pottery style, despite containing variations on shapes traditional to this style (Chichikova 1984, 31–53). While other groups of monochrome ware also circulated during the Hellenistic period, like the second-century kantharoi of the Mesta valley and the western Rhodopes (Bozkova 2005, 47–48) or the third- and second-century vessels with metal shine and burnished strips of northern Thrace (Vurbanov 2013, figs. 267–274), they differ from gray monochrome ware in origin and repertoire.

Plain red (and shades of red) monochrome table ware

This category includes pottery groups of different date, origin, and place of distribution, some of which develop from gray monochrome ware, while others are influenced by Greek plain tableware (Plain ware) or black-glaze pottery. Despite its wide distribution in all Hellenistic complexes from Thrace, there are no studies dedicated specifically to this group, with the exception of the collections from the Apollonia necropolis (Ivanov 1963, 156–167, 232–237; Riapov and Damyanov 2011) and from Koprivlen (Bozkova 2002b). There are important similarities in the repertoires of the Black Sea, the eastern Thracian territories, and the upper Thracian valley.

Characteristic, for example, are: the lentil askoi; some types of laginoi; calyx cups; and lekythoi with partial glazing, among others. The pottery assemblage from southwest Thrace demonstrates connections with local Thracian pottery traditions, but also southern influences, from the Aegean coast and the ancient Macedonian hinterland (Bozkova 2002b).

Black-glaze pottery

The use of black-glaze pottery continues during the early Hellenistic period, but is less prevalent in inland Thrace and is limited to several types: the classical kantharos in its variations; salt pots and small bowls; and fish plates. Black glaze pottery maintains rich and diverse types in the Black Sea colonies (Chichikova 1984, 65–81).

West slope pottery

Two large groups of West slope pottery are recognized locally (Bozkova 2012). The forms and decoration of pottery distributed in southwestern Thrace essentially assign the local market to the north Aegean and ancient Macedonian cultural circle. This pottery group has a limited territorial range, mostly along the Mesta and Struma river valleys (Bozkova 2005). The second group is linked to the pottery culture of the Black Sea region and is distributed on the coast and its associated hinterland. This particular style of the Attic workshops is quite limited and is primarily associated with specimens from the west Pontic colonies. Due to characteristically standardized morphology and decoration, it is impossible to establish the source of some vessels with simple decoration in the “West slope” style, mostly of early Hellenistic date. A major portion of the west Pontic finds resemble the products from centers in Asia Minor and might be considered of “Asia Minor type.” Some finds, however, depart from these standards and seem to be “Pontic imitations” of, for example, Pergamene or Rhodian pottery. Additionally, certain forms, like elongated kantharoi and biconical skyphoi, appear to be local, west Pontic products (Bozkova 1997). Their decoration is applied with little care and motifs are limited and monotonous. Such vessels receive limited distribution outside the Black Sea littoral.

Pottery with relief decoration

After the onset of the second century, the Black Sea apoikiai import and produce spherical handleless cups with relief decoration (once called Megarian bowls). Their distribution in inland Thrace is extremely restricted, a fact that suggests a low degree of popularity. More typical in the colonies were the cups from Ephesos and other Greek cities of Asia Minor. Some finds indicate the operation of local workshops, one of which seems to have been located in Mesembria.

16.6 The Hand-Made Pottery of the Classical and Hellenistic Period

Hand-made pottery production is typical in all periods of Thracian history. A specific category, represented by vessels with simple plastic and incised decoration, has its origins in the Early Iron Age, if not earlier, and continues through the second half of the first millennium. It is comprised of vessels with various surface colors, made from a fabric rich in inclusions, and drawn from a very conservative formal repertoire (Handzhiyska 2010). Among the most common forms are: beehive vessels, often used as urns; shallow bowls with inverted rim; and cups with one handle. The decoration consists of plastic bands, pinched or with notches, and protuberances of various forms and functions.

16.7 Conclusion

This review of the pottery assemblages from Thrace from the Late Bronze Age to the late Hellenistic period has illustrated the great diversity of technological and stylistic groups used in the region. In general, the development of pottery styles in Thrace is contemporary with and similar to that of the greater central Balkan and lower Danube region. Innovations in Thracian pottery drew on goods, ideas, and skills borrowed from mainland and Aegean Greece, as well as Asia Minor. Thrace offered a relatively steady market for imported pottery. Integration with Greek ceramic fashions is best discerned between the late seventh century and the end of the Hellenistic period.

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Note

¹ All ancient dates are BCE unless otherwise noted.

Chapter 17

Inscriptions

Dan Dana

17.1 Introduction

Until quite recently, inscriptions were notorious for being the scarcest category of evidence for pre-Roman Thrace; to previous scholars this seemed of course coherent with the common image of Thracians as isolated and incompatible with “classical” cultures. This image was largely determined by earlier scholarship that either viewed “classical” civilization as naturally opposed to its surrounding and inferior “barbarians” or, on the contrary, betrayed strong nationalist assumptions, nourished by a somewhat Romantic view about “national ancestors,” as often occurs in the traditional Bulgarian and Romanian historiography. Recent evidence shows, however, with the increasing amount of epigraphic data (as well as other archaeological, iconographic, and numismatic finds), that the region of Thrace was as permeable to epigraphic practices as other “barbarian” lands at the periphery of the Hellenic world. Moreover, Thracians lived on the close periphery of the Greek world, and, except in the north and northwest, bordered Greek-speaking areas, like the colonial milieu on the Aegean, Propontic, and Pontic shores, or the Macedonian kingdom (where a Greek dialect was gradually replaced by the koine).

This chapter will provide an overview of epigraphy in Thrace, keeping in mind that Thrace is a geographical expression, with fluid limits (Archibald 2010b, 327–330; and [Chapter 1](#) in this volume); consequently, Thrace will be delimited by natural borders in this chapter: the Pontic coast in the east, the river Istrus (mod. Danube) in the north (although Thracian populations lived beyond it), the Aegean and Propontic coasts in the south, and the Illyrian and Macedonian lands in the west; it is noteworthy that native populations from eastern Macedonia belong to the broader Thracian realm. On the basis of previous surveys (Beševliev 1960; Velkov 1977, 16–17; Mihailov 1977, 1980a, 1984, 1991) and recent discoveries, this chapter, although considering also the later periods, will primarily focus on the Greek inscriptions of pre-Roman Thrace (Classical and Hellenistic ages), given that the epigraphy of Roman Thrace, with special emphasis on language and society, has been brilliantly examined in a recent contribution (Sharankov 2011).

As G. Mihailov (1984, 109) noted, Greek and Latin inscriptions from Thrace “are numerous, of different type and of unequal value, but always precious.” The same can be said about the scholarly editions and publications, as not all

inscriptions are included in accurate corpora, which remain very dispersed, primarily as a consequence of modern political boundaries (Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Turkey), but also by the nature of the language (Greek or Latin). Only inscriptions on durable materials (stone, pottery, metals) have survived, and regional and chronological discrepancies are still important: the quantity and quality of documentation varies according to regions and periods, to contexts or to social status. The main source of these disparities, in fact, is how knowledge of inscribed materials was produced, whether by systematic excavations or by fortuitous discoveries. A more worrying development in these territories is the activity of looters equipped with metal detectors, who destroy ancient sites, and flood the antiquities market with countless pieces without known provenance or archaeological context.

Notwithstanding the lengthy Hellenic tradition, the epigraphy of Thrace during the Roman Empire exhibits bilingualism (Latin and Greek) more than many other provinces, especially in Lower Moesia, although the Roman province of Thrace remained an overwhelmingly Greek-writing area. But the relationship between the two languages, as a means of oral and especially written expression, was extremely variable. To give only one example, in the territory of the Roman colony of Philippi, located in the province of Macedonia on the periphery of Thrace, Thracian natives preferred to write more often in Latin than in Greek, as proved by numerous epitaphs and some dedications; although Latin was of course the official language of the colony, the explanation of this situation lies in the limited extension of Greek writing into this area before the Roman domination (as rightly observed by Brélaz 2008). Nevertheless, even in this latinophone island the situation was more complex, as reflected by an epitaph from the territory of Philippi, composed in Latin, but with Greek letters: Αλιουπαιβες Ζειπ^αλ^α ουξωρι Τερτιε σουε φηκυτ, αν. χ ο'. Σεκους Φυρμι φειλια ρελικυτ βικανιβους Σατρικηνις (etc.) (Pilhofer 2009, no. 48); that is, in Latin transcription, Aliupaibes Zeipala < filius > uxori Tertiae suae fecit an(no) ch(oloniae) LXX. Secus Firmi filia reliquit vicinibus Satricenis (etc.), so “Aliupaibes, son of Zipala, made (the monument) for his wife Tertia, in the 70th year of the colony. Secus, daughter of Firmus, left to the Satriceni villagers” (etc.).

17.2 Inscriptions in Thracian Language

Inscriptions in Thrace were normally written in Greek; Greek colonies were established during the Archaic period all along the north Aegean, Propontic, and Pontic shores, while Greek traders penetrated into the inland, inventing ways of accommodation with native communities and their élite. As for other peoples touched by this phenomenon, even native names written in Greek have Greek endings and almost always respect Greek norms (e.g., the rendering of genitive, etc.).

alphabet, but without omega (Filow 1934, 63–67, nos. 2–5, and 129–131, no. 1; Detschew 1957, 566–582; Duridanov 1985, 89–95 and 100–103; Dimitrov 2009, 13–17): (a) the same text *dadaleme* written on four silver dishes found at Bašova Mogila, near Duvanlij (fifth–fourth centuries BCE); (b) inscriptions on a gold ring, found in the tumulus of Arabadzhyskata Mogila, near Duvanlij (second half of fifth century BCE); (c) the famous ring from Ezerovo, found in 1912, with 61 letters in *scriptio continua* (first half of fifth century BCE?).

This evidence, dated to three periods and coming from three different regions with varying cultural contexts, has generated much delirious speculation. The readings, however, except for the Ezerovo ring, are largely discordant, and no translation is assured. The expected publication of the graffiti from Zone will improve our knowledge of the Thracian language, even if the texts are standardized and very few words will be added to established Thracian glosses; instead, the serious progress will be that our perception and understanding of contacts between Greeks and Thracians will change radically. Unlike several Anatolian alphabets, still in use during Hellenistic and even Roman times, Thracian alphabets, with the notable exception of the well-defined area Zone-Samothrace-Maroneia, are mere local experiments, completely overtaken by Greek (and later on Latin) inscriptions.

17.3 Inscriptions in Classical and Hellenistic Thrace

Classical and Hellenistic Thrace was long considered an *anepigraphic* space, in contrast to the regular epigraphic production of neighboring Greek cities. Spectacular discoveries in the last decades, however, notably from the burials of the ruling élite, but also other finds in commercial or fortified sites that have been more carefully excavated, prove false the reconstructions proposed by the various branches of the discipline called “Thracology”: according to this still dominant view, Thrace should be imagined as a non-literary society, where orality, not judged (as previously) as a lack of civilization, would be instead valorized as a conscious choice of the élite, becoming thus a mark of the aristocratic core of the Thracian culture, that is, a closed society accessible only to initiates, different in all ways from the “classic” world (Fol et al. 1976). Such interpretations appear today as mere *savant* mythology, contradicted by all kinds of evidence, archaeological, literary, and also epigraphic. In fact, the spread of (even limited) literacy in Thrace is revealed in precisely the royal and aristocratic milieu, including funerary and religious contexts. In the same way, all theories and other countless speculations about the peculiar character of Thracian religion, described by modern scholars as dominated by initiation practices and the belief in immortality, are reconstructions, deeply anchored in inherited clichés and modern assumptions, that misrepresent the ancient evidence.

New finds show an unexpected diffusion of Greek language and writing in inland Thrace, from the fifth century BCE onwards: the legends on tribal or royal coins have already been noticed (Youroukova 1976; Peter 1997), but we can add dozens of inscribed vessels, jewels, and arms (especially rings, but also helmets and swords), several funerary texts, more precious official inscriptions emitted by kings, and, last but not least, hundreds of graffiti on pottery. This considerable evidence requires further attention and, especially, caution. Some recent examples are useful, as correct reading and thereafter appropriate interpretation are naturally crucial for territories with emerging evidence, like pre-Roman Thrace.

1. Incorrect word-separation and name not correctly recognized. A funerary text, inscribed on the lintel of the entrance of a monumental chamber tomb excavated in 2000 near Smjadovo (Shumen distr., NE Bulgaria), was read by the first editors as Γονιμασῆζις Σεύθ <ο> υ γυνή (cf. also SEG 52.712), and later even interpreted as a bilingual epitaph, in Thracian³ (“Seze (=Sese) to my wife”) and Greek (“Seuthes’ wife”) (Dimitrov 2009, 17–18) (Figure 17.1). Actually, the correct reading of this fourth-century BCE epitaph is:

ΓΟΝΙΜΑ ΣΗΖΗ

ΣΕΥΘΘΥΓΥΝΗ (sic)

Γονιμαση ζῆ,

Σευθ <ο> υ γυνή

“Gonimase, Seuthes’ wife, (still) lives!”⁴

This is a pure and altogether banal Greek inscription: the compound name of the deceased, bearing a new feminine Thracian name (for the second element, see Kozimases below), is followed by a verb (third person singular) and finally by the social identity of the named individual, namely wife of a certain Seuthes. We can safely infer that Gonimasē was still alive when the tomb was built.

7. Abusive separation. The property mark on the base of a silver phiale from the inventory of an aristocratic tomb at Leshnikova Mogila, near Kazanlak (SEG 46.850, late fifth-century BCE?), with irregular and sometimes reversed letters, was read by the first editors as ΔΥΝΤΟΖΗΛΑΥΙΟ Σ, “(vessel of) Dyntas (Dyntos?), son of Zeila(s)” (Dimitrov 1995; 2009, 31–32), or, slightly different, as Δυντο Ζημυιος, “(phiale of) Dyntos (son) of Zemys (?)” (Theodossiev 1997b). The correct reading is obvious: Δυντοζηλμιος, which can be understood as the genitive singular of the owner’s name, that is “(property) of Dyntozelmis”; this Thracian compound name is elsewhere attested

(Dana 2005, 293–294, cf. SEG 55.742; independently, Sharankov 2007b, 430–431).



Figure 17.1 Epitaph for Gonimase. Regional Museum of History - Shumen.

Photo by Stanimir Stoichev.

An older inscribed artifact is a gold ring from Goljamata mogila, near Duvanlij, with the owner's name in the genitive case (Filow 1934, 101, no. 1): Σ κυθοδοκο, "of Skythodokos." This is a striking hybrid Thracian name, and its presence in the fifth century BCE is easy to explain: while the second element, -τοκος, is well known, the first part of the name recalls that of the Scythians, and confirms the close relationships between Odrysian and Scythian kings (cf. Hdt. 4.80). Another interesting owner's mark is a fourth-century BCE inscribed gold signet-ring, from the recently excavated Dalakova mogila (Sliven distr., near Kabyle); two names in the genitive case are engraved (retrograde) above a bearded head: $\leftarrow \Sigma$ ησα Τηρητος, "Of Seusas, son of Teres" (Kitov and Dimitrov 2008; SEG 58.699).

We may turn now to another kind of evidence. Systematic excavation and chance finds of the past two decades have greatly improved our knowledge about the diffusion of the epigraphic habit in inner Thrace (Domaradzka 2005b; 2007), including inscriptions on stone, vessels (especially phialai), and potsherds; moreover, several funerary chambers have furnished inscribed or painted texts. The explanation of this gradual spread of epigraphic practices, both occasional or with permanent intent, lies primarily in the involvement and presence of traders and artisans from the Greek cities from the Aegean

(Parissaki 2002) and Pontic coasts (Mihailov 1979).

Increasing evidence comes from the site of Vetren, which may be near the ancient emporion Pistiros, in the upper Hebros (mod. Maritsa) valley, on the westernmost marches of the Odrysian kingdom; founded in the middle of the fifth century BCE, it was under Thracian rule until the Macedonian conquest (Domaradzka 2002; 2005a). Greek inhabitants are attested in the fourth century BCE: note the epitaphs of Dionysios son of Diotrephes, from Apollonia (IGBulg 3.1 1067–1068 = SEG 43.485), and of [—]s son of Metro[ph]on (SEG 43.485). In broader perspective, excavations in Vetren provided hundreds of graffiti, some of them with Greek names (Antipatros, Athēnagorēs, Dionysios, Hekataios, Hēroxēinos, Kerdōn, Marōn, Philippidēs), but also Thracian (Ebryzelmis, Kotys, Seuthēs, Spokēs, Tērēs), thus showing the coexistence and the sharing of practices.

The famous granite stele found at Vetren in 1990, a 45-line inscription in Greek (ca. 359–352 BCE), often edited and commented upon, challenged common opinions about “barbarian” kingdoms and Greek emporia (IGBulg 5 5557 ter = SEG 43.486 = 47.1101 = 49.911; Velkov and Domaradzka 1994; Chankowski and Domaradzka 1999; Domaradzka 2002, 298–302; Loukopoulou 2005). This incomplete document lists different privileges and guarantees confirmed by an Odrysian ruler, one of the successors of Kotys I (author of the first agreement), to the settlers of Pistiros, and also to the Greek merchants from Thasos, Maroneia, and Apollonia (probably Apollonia in the Chalcidice rather than Apollonia Pontica on the Black Sea). The earlier agreement with Kotys mentioned in the inscription therefore represents the oldest document known from the chancellery of the Odrysian kingdom, a convention guaranteeing the *asylia* of the emporion and *emporitai* established in Pistiros, confirming their financial transactions with the natives, and granting privileges to north Aegean traders, with those from Maroneia enjoying a favored status. The inscription thus also explains well the prevalence of Ionian forms in graffiti from Vetren that were inscribed on a range of ceramics, such as, for example, fine imported Greek pottery (Attic or Aegean), household pottery, amphorae, pithoi, and roof-tiles. The content of these graffiti was also various, including names of owners, dedications to Greek deities, or numerical notations, but also figures, drawings, and signs, sometimes with ligatures. At Simeonovgrad, also in the Hebros valley, a graffito records a Greek name, Astykrat[ēs] (Domaradzka 2005a, 24).

Such evidence had already been noticed in Seuthopolis, a capital with an invented and royal name that appropriated then Hellenic-Macedonian naming practices for Macedonian foundations in Thrace, like Philippopolis and Alexandropolis. “Seuthes’ town,” quickly excavated by the middle of the twentieth century, also furnished inscribed texts. Most sensational was an official inscription, discovered in 1953 (IGBulg 3.2 1731; Elvers 1994; SEG 42.661; Calder 2004): it is the famous oath (ὄρκος) of Seuthes III’s spouse,

Berenike, of obvious Macedonian descent, sworn together with their four sons (Ebryzelmis, Teres, Satokos, Sadalas), before the dynast of Kabyle, Spartokos (ca. 300–280 BCE). This exceptional document ([Figure 17.2](#)) informs us about the existence of sanctuaries for Greek gods in the two towns, where the oath was to be published: in Seuthopolis, a Samothrakion for the Theoi Megaloi, the Great Gods of Samothrace, and, in the agora, a temple of Dionysus; in Kabyle, a Phosphorion for the goddess Phosphoros (Artemis), and, in the agora, an altar of Apollo. Another text from Seuthopolis, engraved on a statue base, has a religious character: in the first half of the third century BCE, Amaistas son of Medistas dedicated a statue, in the Greek manner of religious magistracies, after completing a term of service as priest of Dionysus: Αμαιστας Μηδιστα ἱερητεύσας Διονύσ[ωι] (IGBulg 3.2 1732). Smaller finds reveal everyday practices: about 140 graffiti on Greek and Thracian ceramics were found in the capital, some of them with Greek names, like [Ch]arixenos, but also Thracian (fragmentary: Seu[thēs], Tar[—], [—ze]lmi[s]),⁵ as well as dedications to Hellenic deities, such as Heracles, Hera, and Zeus (Čičíkova 1987; Domaradzka 2005a, 23). More elaborate texts were also demanded: nearby, at Tazha, a fragmentary funerary epigram from the second century BCE concerns the nobleman Spartokos and his beautiful horses (εὐέλπτον, IGBulg 3.2 1730).



Figure 17.2 The Great Seuthopolis Inscription (IGBulg 3.2 1731). Collection of Sculptures and Inscriptions of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Photo by Krasimir Georgiev.

But the extent of literacy goes much further than the emporion from Vetren or the capital Seuthopolis. In northeastern Bulgaria, the Getic fortress from Sborjanovo, near Ispereh (ca. 330–250 BCE), has provided about 20 Greek graffiti, and also a dedication of Menecharmos, son of Poseidonios, to the goddess Phosphoros (SEG 55.739 = 56.825). Kabyle, another important center already mentioned, has furnished some inscriptions on stone and 20 graffiti, like the owner's mark on an amphora, Σαδάλας Τηρου, "Of Sadalas, son of Teres" (IGBulg 5 5639 bis, third- or second-century BCE); further east, on the Pontic shore, Debelt (the future Roman colony of Deultum) has yielded about 100 graffiti. Except for examples from Pistiros and Seuthopolis and several graffiti from the sites cited above, the majority of these "minor" texts remain unpublished. Elsewhere, one may cite smaller centers, such as Halka Bunar, near Gorno Belevo (Stara Zagora distr.), where a broken potsherd records a Thracian name, in the genitive case: [Αμ]ατοκου or [Σ]ατοκου (SEG 55.737, late fourth–early third century BCE).

It is significant that graffiti are found both on imported and local pottery. Greek writing and language were therefore not only the inherited cultural tradition of Greek merchants and specialists, but also the common means of expression even for parts of the native population; and royal decisions were sometimes intended for permanent publication and inscribed on stone, as elsewhere in the Greek cities or Hellenistic kingdoms. So, the spread of literacy coheres both with the emergence of political communities in terms of networks, interrelationships, and increasingly urbanized nuclei (Archibald 2004; 2005; 2010a), and also with the choice of Greek as *lingua franca*. The extent of literacy is additionally corroborated by the discovery of styli and a metal ring for sealing (letters, acts) and, for the same practical reasons, by the adoption of the Greek system of numbers and measures (Nankov 2012).

Another amazing discovery occurred during the excavation of an aristocratic tomb at Alexandrovo (near Haskovo, third-century BCE): a Greek graffito, Κοζιμασης χρηστός, was incised on the wall-paintings in the round chamber, at a height of about 170 cm above the floor, with a young man's profile drawn below the text (SEG 54.628). Controversy arose about both the significance of χρηστός (for some, the signature of a "master") and the identity of the individual depicted in the portrait: was he the deceased Kozimases or the nobleman (Sharankov 2005)? By chance, the same name – and certainly the same person – appeared recently in another painted inscription on the frescoes decorating a royal grave from Seuthopolis (SEG 58.703, mid-third-century BCE): Κοζιμασης ἐξωγράφησεν. Ροιγος Σευθου, "Kozimases painted (the tomb). Rhoigos, son of Seuthes." Beyond the new evidence for the king Rhoigos, son of Seuthes III (recorded previously only on coins, ca. 300–250 BCE), provided by this text, Kozimases' qualification as a specialist in funerary paintings is now conspicuous. But much more can be inferred from his name alone; a new name for previous commentators, it is in fact recorded

twice in eastern Macedonia, with slightly different spellings: Κοσουμασης at Kalindoia (SEG 42.582, line C₃₂), and Κοζειμασης at Gazoros (SEG 24.614). Names in κοζι- are typical of eastern Macedonia (LGPN IV 196 and 199). So, beyond the second-degree mobility of this skillful professional in Thrace, one may posit an even more important mobility: we can safely assume that Κοζιμασης in fact originated from eastern Macedonia and, presumably with a larger team, contributed in exporting their savoir faire (architecture, paintings, and inscribed texts), which gradually spread from Macedonian lands, where old and new discoveries are now abundant, into inland Thrace. After the Greek link (north Aegean, Pontic, and Athenian), it was the Macedonian connection that enabled the extension of literacy into inner Thrace during the early Hellenistic period. Thrace appears then as a space of coexisting acculturations, which associated Greeks, Macedonians, and various intermediaries, many of them Thracian. But Greek specialists were of course always in demand: a recently discovered gold appliqué, in a tomb of Sinemorets (Burgas distr.), was inscribed by the end of the third or early second century BCE with the name of the artisan and of the owner (Manov 2009): Δημήτριος ἐποί(η)σεν. Κορτοζουντος, “Demetrios made it. Belonging to Kortozous” (apparently, a female name).

Of similar origin are the pieces belonging to the famous Rogozen treasure (Vratsa distr.), discovered in 1985 and 1986, and of other similar pieces from the fourth century BCE found in funerary aristocratic contexts north of the Haemus (mod. Balkan range), such as Alexandrovo (Lovech distr.), Borovo (Ruse distr.), Branichevo (Shumen distr.) in Bulgaria, and Agighiol (Tulcea distr.) in Romania, that have generated a large bibliography (SEG 37.618; Mihailov 1988; Painter 1989; Loukopoulou 2008, with the observations of A. Avram, BE, 2009, 324). Several categories have been distinguished: (a) 26 pointillé inscriptions (among them, 16 at Rogozen); (b) three negligent inscriptions with proper names; (c) 15 graffiti with signs and symbols; and (d) more careful inscriptions, in Greek, identifying a mythological scene: Αὖγη δηλαδῇ, “(this is) Auge, manifestly.” The presence of archaic ο for ου is remarkable (Κερσεβλεπτο, Σ ατοκο).

The owner’s names are those of several kings: Kotys, Kersebleptes, Satokos, Teres (and his father, Amatokos). Sequences with owner’s royal names in the genitive case, followed by the mention of location, are recurrent (Archibald 1998, 265–269; Avram 2011, 64): Κοτυος, with the specification ἐξ Αργισκης/Ηργισκης (Rogozen; and Κερσεβλεπτο ἐξ Εργισκης), ἐξ Απρο (Rogozen), ἐξ Βεο/Βεου (Rogozen, Vraca, Borovo, Agighiol), ἐκ/ἐγ Γειστων/Γηιστων (Rogozen, Alexandrovo), ἐκ Σ αυθαβας (Rogozen). These are place-names from southeast Thrace, in the hinterland of the Thracian Chersonese, already known (such as the future Apri) or still unidentified, and allude to the practice, well attested in literary sources, of sending costly “gifts” to the Odrysian center. One of Kotys’ phialai presents the signature Δισλοιας

ἐποίησε, “Disloias made it” (presumably a Thracian name), while another one flatteringly presents the king as Apollo’s child: Κοτνος Ἀπόλλωνος παῖς (SEG 37.618, no. 14).

While there is a consensus that such vessels were linked to the Odrysian dynasty, they have been explained, variously and persuasively, as prestige gifts from the Odrysian rulers to satellite Triballian and Getic chieftains between Haemus and Istrus (Archibald 1998, 225); or, according to M. B. Hatzopoulos, such vessels are remnants of the royal treasure captured during the victorious campaigns of Philip II and the end of the Odrysian kingdom of Kersebleptes (360–341 BC), later seized by Triballians in the aftermath of Philip’s expeditions against Thrace and Scythians (342–339) (Loukopoulou 2008, 161).

Other inscribed vessels have appeared recently and reveal other practices: in the royal tomb of Goljama Kosmatka, near Shipka, together with the bronze helmet of Seuthes III (ca. 340–300/295 BCE), inscribed Σ ευθου on the forehead, there were found two inscribed silver phialai and a silver jug, where numerals indicate the weight according to Alexander the Great’s system of measures: Σ ευθου, ὀλκή τετράδραχμα Ἀλεξάνδρεια ΔΙΙΙΙ (12 tetradrachms of Alexander and 2 drachms); Σ ευθου, ὀλκή τετράδραχμα Ἀλεξάνδρεια ΙΔ | | (14 tetradrachms of Alexander and 2 drachms) (Manov 2006; SEG 55.776). The kingdom of Seuthes III, competitor of the restless Lysimachus, reveals its intended Hellenistic character.

Nor were the Thracian dynasts isolated from the Aegean, and this external evidence still constitutes, along with some literary echoes, the foundation of modern chronology and hypotheses (Mihailov 1980a). Thucydides 2.29.4–6 mentions a treaty between Athens and Sitalkes in 431 BCE, in the context of the Peloponnesian war, as well as the grant of Athenian citizenship to his son Sadokos and proxeny to his brother-in-law Nymphodoros of Abdera, thus confirming the role of north Aegean Greeks as intermediaries between their northern neighbors and the Athenian Empire. By the same time, the cult of Bendis was officially introduced at Athens (from 429/428 BCE), for political reasons, but also as a special favor to groups of Thracian metics and slaves, both in Piraeus and in the city; the Thracian goddess remained quite popular in this milieu even in the Hellenistic period, as can be inferred from inscriptions and theophoric names (Masson 1988; Deoudi 2010). Other public inscriptions from Athens record the names of Thracian kings: Medokos (IG II² 22, in 390/389 BCE); the Odrysian Ebryzelmis and more embassies (IG II² 31, in 386/385 BCE); a member of the Thracian dynasty, “Rheboulas, son of Seuthes [II], brother of Kotys,” is indicated as resident in the deme Angele (IG II/III³ 1.2 351, in 331/330 BCE). After the death of Kotys and the rise of Philip II in 359 BCE, an alliance was concluded between Athens and Kotys’ successors, namely Berisades, Amadokos, and Kersebleptes (IG II² 126, in 357/356 BCE); there followed an Athenian symmachia with Ketriporis (in

western Thrace) and his brothers, as well as with the Paeonian king Lyppeios and the Illyrian king Grabos, against Philip II (IG II² 127, in 356/355 BCE). Elsewhere, in the symbolic heartland of Greece, two decrees from Delphi, granting proxeny and other privileges, honor the sons of Kersebleptes, namely Iolaos, Poseidonios, Medistas, Teres (FD III.1 392, in 355 BCE), and later on Kotys, son of Rhaizdos (FD III.4 414, in 276 or 267 BCE).

As for the neighboring Greeks, the evidence is not scarce. One fragmentary treaty between the king Sadalas III and Mesambria (ὁμολογία Σαδάλα καὶ Μεσσαμβριανῶν) has survived, concerning the problem of shipwrecks on the shores of his kingdom (IGBulg 1² 307 = 5 5086, ca. 281–277 BCE). Established before the Celtic invasion, the treaty is opportunely introduced by a decree honoring the king as benefactor and granting him the usual privileges, mentioning thereafter its publication in the temple of Apollo, beside other honorific stelai for Sadalas' ancestors, who are listed (Mopsyestis, Taroutinas, Medistas, Kotys). We may safely infer that Mesambria renewed the treaty with each king of the dynasty, like the preceding case of the Vetren stele, referring to the same oath as that in the time of Kotys I (Avram 2011, 69). One century later, an honorific decree from Mesambria honors a Thracian from the neighboring tribe of Astae (IGBulg 1² 312).

Political history is highly dependent on inscriptions, which confirm the existence of several centers of power in Thrace. King Mostis (ca. 133–86 BCE?), ruler in Propontic Thrace and well attested by coins, is recorded inside the limits of his kingdom, at Bisanthe and Heraion Teichos (SEG 37.602 and 42.662; Sayer 1992). The dealings as well as the war with the Dacian king Byrebistas, entitled “the first and the greatest among the kings of Thrace” (ca. 82–44 BCE), are recorded by inscriptions from Dionysopolis (IGBulg 1² 13, a decree for Akornion, after 48 BCE), Mesambria (IGBulg 1² 323–326, about the strategoi), and possibly Odessos (IGBulg 1² 46), with a list of eponymous-priests μετὰ τὴν κάθοδον, after their return in the liberated city.

Several common people of native origin are recorded in fifth- and fourth-century BCE epitaphs of Apollonia Pontica, such as a woman, Paibinē (IGBulg 1² 430) and a father's name Basstakilēs (sic) (IGBulg 1² 440); later (third–second century BCE) in the same city, a fragmentary inscription records the possessions of Kotys son of Taroulas, as well as the tomb of a local dynast, Mostis (IGBulg 1² 469 bis). As for Thracian penetration into Greek cities (Danov 1960, 1983; Oppermann 2004), the evidence from the Propontic and Aegean coasts is even more plentiful, even if in general much later (Robert 1964; Parissaki 2007). At the end of the Hellenistic period, and especially in the Imperial period, the most relevant dossiers concern Dionysopolis and Odessos on the western Pontic coast, where natives enter the gymnasium in large number and were therefore eligible for the highest magistracies (Dana and Dana 2013), while local games in Odessos were

named in the Imperial period Darzaleia, pertaining to the local god Derzelas/Darzas, revered as a “Great God.”

Local chieftains are sometimes mentioned in decrees from Istros, concerning the troubled relationship with the (Getic) king Zalmodegikos (ISM I 8, third century BCE), the Thracian chieftain Zoltes (ISM I 15, ca. 200 BCE), and some others; as elsewhere in other Greek cities in permanent negotiation with foreign powers, the cautious style of such official decisions alludes to tribute (φóρος), regular tax imposed by a treaty, and also to equivocal “gifts” (δῶρα) for their “protectors” (Avram 2011, 61–70).

Finally, almost all members of the Sappaeon dynasty (and sometimes of the Astaeon tree) are honored by Thracian strategoi, but more often by civic communities as benefactors, or only incidentally mentioned, in dozens of inscriptions from the edges of the Thrace: Abritus, Callatis, Tirizis, Dionysopolis, Odessus, Apollonia Pontica, Bizye, Selymbria, Perinthus, (future) Plotinopolis, Samothrace, Maroneia, Abdera, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Thasos, Thessalonike; but also from Cyzicus, Chios, Ephesus, Chaironeia, Athens, and Rome. Implicated directly or indirectly in the Roman civil wars, and then reduced to the role of client kings under Augustus and his successors and part of the eastern dynastic network (Sullivan 1979), some Thracian dynasts had the occasion to assume euergetic positions in Callatis and Thessalonike, but also further afield: before 19 CE, Kotys III was eponymous archon at Athens (IG II² 1070 = Agora 15 304, 9–10), while Rhoimetalkes III was eponymous archon at Athens in 36/37 CE (IG II² 1967, 2292, 3156), and eponymous stephanophoros in Chios (Robert 1938, 143–144). It was under the patronage of one of these kings, Kotys (III?), that a horothesia reestablished the boundaries between Dionysopolis and Callatis (IGBulg 5 5011).

A few words about Thracians abroad are needed (some examples in Fraser 1993). They were numerous as slaves and metics at Athens and sporadically in the Aegean world, but are more plentifully recorded as soldiers and settlers in the major Hellenistic kingdoms (Lagid, Antigonid, Seleucid, and Attalid), especially in Ptolemaic Egypt, where many papyri refer to them as clerouchs, and as far west as Cirta in the Numidian kingdom, where two Thracian mercenaries are recorded on Greek inscriptions (Dana 2011b).

There is now sufficient evidence that the use of the Greek language in pre-Hellenistic and early Hellenistic Thrace, together with the spread of literacy, confirm the close connection between commerce and politics (Domaradzka 2005a, 25). Yet, until the Roman epoch, the most important inscriptions concerning the political history of the Thracian region are those of the Greek periphery and of the Aegean area, a situation that changed radically with the provincialization of the former client kingdom in 45–46 CE.

17.4 Inscriptions in Roman Thrace

Throughout the imperial period, thousands of inscriptions are known in Thrace, and the gain extends furthermore to their quality and variety, including: different kinds of official texts (decrees, laws, official letters, honorific and public dedications), boundary stones, milestones, personal dedications, epitaphs and epigrams, catalogues, and graffiti. Before the Roman domination, the epigraphic habit (at least, on stone) was regular on the coasts, where the Greek cities were located, but by the second century CE it extended throughout all of inland Thrace. One of the main factors, along with the diffusion of Greek as an epigraphic mean, was urbanization and/or municipalization in Thrace and Lower Moesia, principally in the second century CE, and especially under the reign of Trajan. Yet, strong geographical and chronological variations within the region do exist, some real, others only apparent and due to insufficient exploration: to give only one example, inner European Turkey is very scarcely investigated; little is known about the two Roman colonies in Thrace founded in the first century CE, Apri (colonia Claudia Aprensis) and Deultum (Colonia Flavia Pacis Deultensium), and the discoveries from the two sites are still largely unreported, while Philippi (colonia Augusta Iulia Philippensium) in Macedonia, for example, is attested by a broad range of plentiful evidence. Other regional discrepancies are determined by different factors, as in Lower Moesia, where municipia and coloniae furnish official evidence, but also part of the epigraphic production emitted by more common persons, which shows the superior visibility of many immigrants, military as well as civilians (for example, different specialists from Bithynia).

But the first proof of the general diffusion of the epigraphic habit is given by the widespread dedications to indigenous divinities, in most cases with Greek or Roman names, even in rural contexts. Consider, for example, ILBulg 209, a dedication found in the Asclepieum from Glava Panega, in Lower Moesia: *Silvano sancto ex vico Longinopara heredes Eftecenthi Coci v(otum) p(osuerunt)*, “To saint Silvanus, the heirs of Eftecenthus son of Cocus, from the village Longinopara, set up according to a vow.” The Thracian onomastics are interesting, as is the hybrid name of the vicus, Longinopara, which associates a Latin name and a well-known element of Thracian toponyms, -para, and means “village of Longinus.”

Outside the Greek cities of the coasts (such as Perinthus, seat of the provincial governor), there is a clear concentration of inscriptions in urban centers like Philippopolis, Augusta Traiana, Pautalia, Serdica, Nicopolis ad Nestum, and also in the military regions or on the Danubian limes, where the evidence is mainly, but not exclusively, in Latin. While the quasi-totality of inscriptions from the province of Thrace are in Greek, Lower Moesia is a bilingual province; Greek is privileged in dedications, however, especially in non-military contexts. Nevertheless, the famous “Jireček line” delineating the use

of Greek and Latin in the Balkans is neither a linguistic nor ethnic frontier (Mihăescu 1978, 73–75; Gerov 1980b; Rizakis 1995; Galdi 2008). Even in areas where Latin inscriptions are dominant, Greek loan-words are noticeable, and, inversely, more Latin loan-words occur in Greek inscriptions (Sharankov 2011, 140 and 152–153).

Roman Thrace is thus definitely part of the Hellenophone provinces, another peculiar sign being the existence of the provincial koinon: the seat of the Thracian Common Council was at Philippopolis, and honorific evidence attests at least 18 Thracarchs, many of them of clear native descent (Sharankov 2007a). At the confluence of Hellenic and Roman traditions, Thrace offers also abundant epigraphic, iconographic, numismatic, and archaeological evidence for agonistic festivals, athletic contests, and gladiatorial games (Vagalinski 2009).

Thousands of dedications, and also countless anepigraphic reliefs, have been discovered in Thrace and Lower Moesia, primarily honoring indigenous gods; many were offered by soldiers in service or veterans, and also by women. As the growing evidence suggests a proliferation of rural sanctuaries, there is now conclusive documentary evidence about the development of several regional sanctuaries with a large quantity of dedications, which indicate the popularity of some local divinities, such as, for example, Asclepius Saldouissēnos/Saldokelēnos/Saldēnos at Glava Panega, Apollo Aulousadēnos (Draganovec, in Lower Moesia), and, in the territory of Philippopolis, Asclepius Zymydrēnos at Batkun, and the Nymphs at Burdapa. The epithet of the protecting god of Philippopolis, Apollo Kendrisos, is Thracian, and is visible in an eponymous tribe (phyle Kendriseis) and local games (Kendriseia) in the city, attested in inscriptions and on coins. Religious mobility is epigraphically attested, for example, at the Asclepieum of Glava Panega in Lower Moesia, where many dedicators from Pautalia (province of Thracia) made gifts, among them the councilor (bouleutēs) Dizas son of Moukases and the phylarchos Priscus son of Iulius (IGBulg 2 511, 536, 540, 544).

Most of the divine epithets are in fact derived from place-names, and inform us about indigenous place-names: so, present-day Kopilovci, in the territory of Pautalia, was *Karistoron/*Caristorum, easily recognized from the epithets of Zeus and Hera Καρίστορηνοί, worshipped in a sanctuary where some 20 dedications in Greek, and one in Latin, to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Cari[storenus] were found (AE, 1915, 90).

If very few epitaphs (stelai and altars) have been discovered in inner Thrace (Slawisch 2007), although revealing much of the social status and cultural identity of the deceased (Ivanov 2008), more are known from Lower Moesia (Conrad 2004) and eastern Macedonia, including the middle Strymon valley, and in most cases concerning the whole family.

Some catalogues are extremely important, such as the foundation charter of the emporium at Pizus, from 202 CE, followed by a list of about 200 settlers, and an edict of the governor Sicinnius Clarus on the establishment of emporia, market towns (IGBulg 3.2 1690); others concern various religious associations such as, for example, the catalogue of a Bacchic thiasus from Cillae, in the territory of Philippopolis (IGBulg 3.1 1517). For the inner organization and the peculiar structure of the province, namely the strategiai (Parissaki 2009), of particular interest is the precious catalogue of 33 strategoi from Thrace, who set up an honorific inscription for the governor M. Vettius Marcellus (IThrAeg 84, ca. 46–60 CE).

As in the case of other epigraphic evidence, the major gain from such inscriptions is onomastic insight into a provincial society, which reveals ethnic and cultural features (a majority of Thracian names, but also various Greek and Latin names) as well as juridical status (peregrines, Roman citizens, slaves and freedmen). As in other provinces of the Empire, both occidental and oriental, it would be inappropriate to regard this profusion of native names (with different spellings) as proof of resistance or evidence for a resurgence of traditions; this is in fact an ordinary result of a body of evidence that is continually growing in size and is the mark of the diffusion of epigraphic habit.⁶

Hundreds of epitaphs are known from the old Greek city of Odessus in Lower Moesia, which can serve as a mirror for the local society in showing an intense presence of Getic and Thracian groups in the town, even at the highest levels. For example, the epitaph IGBulg 1² 178 bis is quite representative: Ἀγαθήνωρ Ἀπολλωνίου καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες αὐτοῦ Βοων Ζωπύρου καὶ Τούτας Ζωπύρου καὶ ὁ υἱὸς αὐτῶν Ἀγαθήνωρ καὶ ἡ θυγάτηρ Ζουδιεγίπτου χαίρετε, “Agathenor son of Apollonios and his wives, Boon daughter of Zopyros and Toutas daughter of Zopyros, and the daughter Zoudiegiptous, farewell.” It is striking to note that wives (and daughters) usually bear indigenous names, while husbands (and sons) Greek ones; in fact, the sociocultural milieu was the same, but men were more concerned with public life than women. This pattern, well attested at Odessus, is similar to what can be observed elsewhere, as, for example, in Egypt or Syria during the Imperial period. We may also suppose that Agathenor successively married two sisters (both wives have the same father’s name), firstly Boon, and, after her death, her sister Zoudiegiptous; in doing so, Agathenor reinforced the alliance between the two families.

The link between text and monument is essential, not only in terms of monumentality or expense, but also in association with images or broader context. The most relevant case is the omnipresence of the motif of the so-called Thracian Rider (Heros equitans), extremely popular in both votive and funerary contexts. This theme was furthermore undoubtedly perceived and used as an identifying mark, as its diffusion concerns primarily Thracian-

speaking populations, an attribution that is very frequently confirmed by onomastics. Enormously popular in Thrace, Lower Moesia, and eastern Macedonia, the theme of the Thracian Horseman occurs also, albeit sporadically, in western Macedonia, and even on monuments erected by Thracian soldiers at Rome, both votive and funerary.

Military employment and recruitment were major concerns in Thrace and this is intensely reflected in the inscribed evidence. While Thrace was a provincia inermis, with only several auxiliary units, countless Thracian recruits served in all other provinces, including on the Danubian limes and in Lower Moesia. They are attested in all the corps of the Roman army, mainly in the auxiliary troops (as the majority of Thracians were until 212 CE peregrines) and in the praetorian fleets (of Misenum and Ravenna), but also, especially during the third century CE, in the two élite units from Rome, the praetorian cohorts and the imperial guards (*equites singulares Augusti*); some special formulas similar to military diplomas, from the third century CE, even concern service in legions. As every year thousands of Thracian veterans returned home, hundreds of military diplomas from Bulgaria have come to light in the last two decades, often through illicit excavation. The inscription of these privileges on bronze, which were copies of imperial constitutions exposed at Rome, granted Roman citizenship (*civitas Romana*) to veterans and their offspring, and also recognized their peregrine unions as legal marriages (*conubium*). Possibly as many as 200 such documents on bronze granted to Thracian soldiers are known to date, and the evidence is increasing, bringing to light new names, new place-names, and unexpected data for the military and social history of these populations (Dana 2013).

These soldiers, in service all over the Empire, were not lost to their communities of origin. They did more than return home after 25 or more years of military service, many of them with wives and children. A pertinent example is provided by the imperial response from 238 CE to the villagers of Skaptopara (in the territory of Pautalia) to their petition for help against the abuses of some powerful local men; Gordian III's rescript, inscribed partly in Latin, and mostly in Greek translation, was in fact sent to their devoted fellow villagers (*convicanus*) Aur. Pyrrus/Πύρρος, a praetorian of the tenth cohort, who petitioned the emperor (IGBulg 4 2236; Hallof 1994).

Concerning the language choice, soldiers were the privileged vehicle for Latin expression: as proved in a recent study, it is striking that from the 37 epitaphs of soldiers and veterans in the province of Thrace, 25 are in Latin, 7 in Greek and 3 bilingual (Slawisch 2007, 169); the contrast is even stronger if we consider that almost all Latin inscriptions come from Perinthus. Elsewhere, the presence of garrisons well explains the use of Latin: such is the case of a funerary altar from the second century CE with the Thracian Rider found in Kabyle (AE, 1978, 730; Slawisch 2007, 189, no. K 3):

D(is) M(anibus).

Val(eria) Festiva et Ulpus Vi-

tales Damanaeo Ama-

zeni, generi (sic)⁷ suo, milit(i),

5 c(ustodi) ar(morum) leg(ionis), mil(itavit) an(nis) XXIII, vix(it)

an(nis) XXXX, cui bene mer(enti)

aram posuerunt.

“To the spirits of the departed. Valeria Festiva and Ulpus Vitales to their son-in-law Damanaeus son of Amazenus, soldier, keeper of arms of the legion, who served 24 years, lived 40 years; they set up the altar to the well deserving.”

The deceased, belonging to an unspecified legion from Lower Moesia, was more probably *custos armorum* (keeper of arms) than *car(cerarius) leg(ionis)*, as most editors have preferred to develop the abbreviation. He is curiously named only by his ancient peregrine nomenclature, even if he was a Roman citizen, as his service in a legion compulsory implied; the same northern origin is confirmed by the Daco-Moesian character of his onomastics.

In other contexts, the choice of both languages was presumably implied by the origin of the author of the command, or by the composite milieu where the inscription was posted. Such a bilingual inscription, recently published but unfortunately of uncertain provenance, accompanied a votive relief in the series of the “Thracian Rider,” perhaps from the first century CE (Dimitrova and Clinton 2010; AE, 2010, 1868):

Felicio C(ai) Menani

ser(vus) votum solvit pro

se / Φηλικίων Γαῖου Μενά-

νίου δοῦλος εὐχὴν

5 ἀπέδωκεν ὑπὲρ ἑαυτ^{οῦ}.

“Felicio, slave of Gaius Menanius, fulfilled a vow for himself.”

It is striking, however, that here the dedication was first written in Latin, then translated into Greek, as proved by the strange expression εὐχὴν ἀπέδωκεν ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ.

Some epigrams and more elaborate texts are exciting, such as a recently published funerary epigram carefully engraved on a statue base of Apollo Kendrisos, patron-god of the Thracian metropolis, which concerns a presumed Bithynian, more probably trader than poet, Maximus of Apamea, who died in Philippopolis at the age of 70: the deceased is presented as someone “loved by

Thrace and the world,” Θρήκη καὶ κόσμῳ πεφιλημένος (Sharankov 2007c, 2011, 143; Jones 2011; SEG 57.635).

17.5 Inscriptions in Late Antique Thrace

Thrace remained part of the Later Roman Empire, and Greek and Latin inscriptions, albeit in much lesser quantity, were quite regularly produced. In this period, despite their drastic diminution, the choice of Latin is more important, although privileged in military and administrative contexts. So, a fourth-century CE Latin epitaph from Serdica commemorates Felix, sig(nifer) d(e) n(umero) Divit(ensium), 30 years old at the time of his death, and a native from Ambianum (mod. Amiens), civis [A]mbianensis (CIL III 7415; Beševliev 1964, no. 6); on the stele, the deceased is depicted between two horses, in a standard military scheme. As a result of the Christianization of the region, the majority of inscriptions pertain to the new religion, particularly epitaphs, many of which commemorate priests and bishops and are marked by crosses and other Christian symbols, in addition to the usual formulaic expressions and sometimes specific dating formulas. Other monuments include several honorific dedications (especially for emperors), various building inscriptions, boundary markers between villages and estates, milestones, and also brick stamps.

A large part of the names are Christian, but Greek and Latin onomastics are also frequent. Despite their relative scarcity, Thracian names still occur in Late Antique inscriptions, until the sixth century CE, which is altogether coherent with the increasing presence of persons from Thrace in imperial offices – ecclesiastical, administrative, and mainly military. The contrast with their spectacular presence during the Imperial period is strong, however. Three examples from the fifth and sixth centuries CE will suffice.

1. A priest buried at Serdica, in Dacia Mediterranea: † Ic requiescit corpus viri religiosi Buraidi presbyteri †, “Here rests the body of the pious priest Buraidēs” (Beševliev 1964, no. 12).
2. A soldier from an élite unit (domesticus), Fl(avius) Moco, de patria Artaco, de vico Calso, honoring the memory of his wife Dona (=Domina/Domna) at Beroe (formerly Augusta Traiana) (Beševliev 1964, no. 192).
3. The painted epitaph on a fresco on the wall of a grave from Beroe, honoring the memory of a woman: † Ἐνθάδε κατάκειται Ζιασαλβη ἡ μακαριστάτη, “Here lies Ziasalbe the most blessed,” with precise date: 2 December of the 14th indiction, under the consulate of Belisarius, that is 535 CE (SEG 49.873).

Christian funerary inscriptions are not only precious for their onomastics, since they often give indications about occupations and birth places. A

recently published Christian epitaph from Sozopol (the Christian name given to former Apollonia Pontica), dated to the fifth or sixth century CE, was inscribed contrariwise on a “pagan” marble funerary stele depicting the funerary feast, from late Hellenistic or Imperial times. The deficient orthography is usual for this period: † Ἐντάδε κατάκιτε Βητάλιο(ς) πρεβ(ύτερος) Δηβελτοῦ †. Κ(ύριε) Χρι(στ)έ, “Here lies Vitalius, priest of Deultum. Lord Christ!” (Dana 2010; AE, 2010, 1456). If we are here dealing with local mobility, as Sozopolis and Deultum were neighboring cities, a large-scale mobility continued to affect Thrace, as many Syrians or people from Asia Minor, usually indicating their provinces, cities, and even villages, are mentioned in epitaphs, especially at Odessus, but also in Serdica and Philippopolis.

17.6 Conclusion

Some 35 years ago, Georgi Mihailov still judged that “Classical Thrace remains a region without inscriptions” (“La Thrace de l’époque classique reste un pays anépigraphe”; Mihailov 1980a, 21). As demonstrated above, however, Thrace was never an isolated area: we have entered definitively into a new phase that allows for a better understanding of the transformations that affected local communities in the Balkans. Further discoveries of texts in a Thracian alphabet are to be expected and still more new inscribed texts in Greek of Classical and Hellenistic times from inland Thrace. Epigraphy remains the main source of evidence for Roman Thrace and will never lose its supremacy, as in all other provinces of the Empire, but it has become invaluable for later and, in particular, earlier periods. Systematic excavations and the publication of new and more accurate corpora, which reexamine older and newer evidence, will diminish regional and chronological disparities and thus help to release this space from its relative isolation in the Western scholarly milieu.

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Guide to Further Reading

Latin inscriptions from Thrace known up to 1902 are collected in *CIL III*; a new regional corpus covers only the western part of Lower Moesia (B. Gerov, *ILBulg*, 1989); additions are currently signaled in *AE*, with revised texts. Greek inscriptions from Bulgaria, much more numerous, are excellently edited in the corpus of G. Mihailov (*IGBulg*, 1958–1997); for the first edition of the first volume, the observations of Robert 1959 are always useful; the novelties are annually registered, with improved texts, in *SEG*, while the most relevant inscriptions are commented upon in the *BE*. Late antique inscriptions, both Greek and Latin, are edited by Beševliev 1964; more studies are collected in Velkov 1977 and 1980. Other inscriptions, mainly Greek, are edited in Beševliev 1952 (Sofia Museum) and Manov 2008 (Middle Strymon

valley). There are regional corpora for Scythia Minor (ISM I–III, V; IV, in press), Aegean Thrace (IThrAeg), and European Turkey (Taşlıklioğlu 1961–1971). Inscriptions from the Greek cities of the North Propontic coast are published in the series *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* (Bonn), nos. 19 (Sestus and Thracian Chersonesus) and 58 (Byzantium and Selymbria); for Perinthus, see Sayar 1998; those from eastern Macedonia are discussed in the *Meletemata* series (Athens). For the region of Philippi, in Macedonia, the corpus of Pilhofer 2009 will be soon superseded (cf. Rizakis et al. 2007); for corrections of inscriptions from Aegean Thrace and eastern Macedonia, see Mihailov 1975 (25–35) and 1980b.

More epigraphic studies are included in the volumes in honor of B. Gerov (Tačeva and Bojadžiev 1990) and G. Mihailov (Fol et al. 1995); several contributions of the great Bulgarian epigraphist are conveniently collected in Mihailov 2007. Select topics, with attention to contexts, can be found in Iakovidou 2007, and especially in the two volumes of *Thrakika Zetemata* (Loukopoulou and Psoma 2008; Parissaki 2013). Each year, new inscriptions are published in two publications from Sofia, *Archaeologia Bulgarica* and *Numismatica, Sphragistica, and Epigraphica*. In the future, Nikolay Sharankov, who is currently continuing the corpus *IGBulg*, will publish dozens of invaluable inscriptions discovered in the temple of the Pontic Mother of the Gods from Dionysopolis (cf. Lazarenko et al. 2013), while Lidia Domaradzka is preparing the corpus of Classical and Hellenistic Greek Graffiti from Thrace.

Thracian language, so controversial, remains unfortunately a topic subjected to exaggerations and speculations; the best presentations are the critical overviews of Brixhe and Panayotou 1997 (and Panayotou 2007); the evidence from Zone will be published by Claude Brixhe (cf. Brixhe 2006). For the Thracian names (see briefly Mihailov 1977), the corpus of Detschew 1957 and the regional repertory *LGPN IV* (2005; corrections in Dana 2006) was superseded in 2014 by *Onomasticon Thracicum* (cf. Dana 2011a).

On the language of Greek inscriptions from Bulgaria, the monograph of Mihailov 1943 is now superseded by Slavova 2004 (focus on phonology) and 2009 (Greek cities of the Black Sea coast); Mihăescu 1978 is still valuable for Latin in the Balkans.

The iconographic and epigraphic repertory on the “Thracian Rider” of Kazarow 1938, partially superseded by the incomplete *CCET* (*Corpus Cultus Equitis Thracii*, Leiden, I–II and IV–V, 1979–1984, *EPRO* 74), is now replaced by the monumental work of Oppermann 2006; on this peculiar figure, see the stimulating study of Dimitrova 2002; about cults in Thrace and Moesia, see the survey of Velkov, Gerassimova-Tomova 1989. The funerary stelai are now collected in corpora for Lower Moesia (Dimitrov 1942; Conrad

2004) and Thrace (Slawisch 2007).

Useful regional analyses are provided for Byzantium (Robert 1964), Aegean Thrace (Parissaki 2007), Propontic Thrace (Loukopoulou 1989), western Thrace (Gerov 1959–1969) and the middle Strymon valley or Bulgarian Macedonia (Manov 2008; Slavova 2010), and, generally, Gerov 1980a and 1988; with extreme caution, one may consult Samsaris 1989 (Lower Strymon) and 1993 (Thracians in the present Greek territory). Language and society in Roman Thrace, as mirrored in epigraphy, are discussed in the illuminating paper of Sharankov 2011. For some examples of inscribed votive or funerary reliefs, coming from known locations or from the market of antiquities, see Dana 2006 and 2009; Sharankov 2007b and 2009.

Notes

- 1 The model is the Parian alphabet (with the crescent-moon beta) ; there is no distinction between long and short vowels (no H and Ω), and no signs for aspirates (Θ, Φ, X) ; instead, we may note two signs for /i(:)/ and for y, and a specific sign (↓), maybe for [ks].
- 2 As it occurs in the complete formulas.
- 3 Similarly, the Greek adverb δηλαδῆ (“clearly, manifestly”), on a Rogozen silver-gilt phiale, was unduly considered a Thracian word (Dimitrov 2009, 28).
- 4 As suggested also by K. Hallof, SEG 52.712, app. crit., and A. Avram, BE, 2009, 331.
- 5 Add also Sharankov 2011, 136, fig. 1: Σευθο[v] (fourth-century BCE); and another graffito with a name in genitive, Τηρου, at Philippopolis, in the third century BCE (Sharankov 2011, 136, fig. 2).
- 6 On names in Latin inscriptions, the monograph of Minkova 2000 is to be avoided (see Dana 2008).
- 7 Various spellings and mistakes occur in Greek and Latin inscriptions, some of them pertaining to the spoken language, other to faults of the stone-cutters (see, e.g., Sharankov 2011, 137–138). According to Bojadjev 2000, Latin ceased to function as an instrument of universal communication in Lower Moesia as early as ca. 50–100 CE; his conclusions seem to ignore that the so-called “vulgar Latin” was, as everywhere in the Roman Empire, the spoken language, and definitely not the Ciceronian phrasings.

Chapter 18

Introduction to the Numismatics of Thrace, ca. 530 BCE–46 CE

Evgeni I. Paunov

“Thrace, indeed, of that time was more exposed to the influence of Asia than that of Europe”

(Gardner 1918, 106)

18.1 Previous Research

This contribution is a modest attempt to provide a concise introduction to the main scholarly problems, peculiarities, and key bibliography of the numismatics of ancient Thrace. It deliberately omits the Roman period – Republican, Imperial, and Roman provincial coinages in the Thracian provinces.

There is a long tradition of interest in the study of numismatics of ancient Thrace. Coinage of the Thracian kings and tribes has been continuously treated in numerous works since the middle of the eighteenth century.¹ The most comprehensive works on Thracian coinage, however, remain both corpora published by the late Yordanka Youroukova (Youroukova 1976; 1992). In the last decade, however, study of the coins of ancient Thrace has been neglected in international numismatic scholarship. Indeed, except for a short mention (Psoma 2012, 157–159), Thrace is absent from the recent Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage (Metcalf 2012) and only seldom appears in the “Surveys of Numismatic Research” published each five years by the International Numismatic Commission (CIN/ INC), where it is usually integrated into the numismatics of Greece and Macedonia. Ulrike Peter has recently published a bibliographic review of the numismatics of Thrace (Peter 2009), though, and the coin history of Thrace has been targeted in a large number of: newly published numismatic corpora for various city-mints (e.g., Amphipolis (Lorber 1990), Mesambria (Karayotov 1994; 2009), Odessus (Topalov 1999; Karayotov 2007), Apollonia (Topalov 2007), Thracian Chersonese (Tzvetkova 2004), Cardia (Tzvetkova 2009), and Abdera (Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007)); more general studies on royal and tribal types (Peter 1997; Manov 1999; Peykov 2011); and die-studies of large-scale late Hellenistic coinages distributed in Thrace, such as the tetradrachms of Aesillas (Bauslaugh 2000), Thasos (Prokopov 2006), and the Macedonian Regions (Prokopov 2012).²

18.2 The Setting

Thrace, strategically located at the junction between the west (Europe) and east (Asia), has always been a zone of powerful interests and states and cultures competing for domination (see [Chapter 2](#)). From the earliest times the seascape and river network of southern Thrace have influenced the economic and political orientation of the area and largely enhanced contacts, interactions, and trade with the Aegean and the Mediterranean more broadly. Ancient authors (e.g., Thuc. 4.107; 7.57; Str. 7.47–48) had pointed out that the lower courses of the Strymon, Nestos, and Hebros (mod. Maritsa) rivers were navigable and suited for communication and transport (Casson 1926, 23, 34; Isaac 1986, 141–143; de Boer 2010, 176–177). Indeed, control over the middle and lower courses of the Hebros provided access to the Thracian interior (Archibald 1994, 445). This river network effectively bridged the Aegean with the core area of Thrace. Down to the late nineteenth century, various goods, timber, and iron ore/bullion were transported via the Hebros/Maritsa from the area of Philippopolis down to the river mouth at Aenos, and then redirected to Constantinople (May 1950, 11; Tsonchev 1962, 848–852; de Boer 2010, 177). These aspects of geography are confirmed by Thrace's rich and versatile numismatic performance.³ Hence, the coin evidence is of primary importance for the complex reconstruction of Thracian history and socioeconomic relations. But let us allow the coins to speak for themselves.

18.3 Numismatic History of Thrace

The Archaic period

Coinage was invented in western Asia Minor around the middle of the seventh century (Schaps 2004; Kroll 2012).⁴ The new medium was made from electrum, an alloy of gold and silver, and first used in Lydia, before spreading to Ionia (Kroll 2012, 38–40; Konuk 2012, 44–45). Coins were instantly acceptable in payment on trust because of the involvement of the state as issuing authority, indicated by a stamp (Seaford 2004, 136; Kroll 2012, 39). From the very beginning, coins were normally issued in small fractional denominations as well as in single and multiple weight units – stater, drachm, and their fractions (Kim 2002; Kagan 2006). Because of its sheer practicality, coinage quickly became an indispensable instrument of everyday economic and public life as well as a standard for the weights and measures of any well-ordered state (Kroll 2012, 40).

Coinage was introduced into Thrace in the last decades of the sixth century by the Greek poleis on the Aegean littoral: Abdera (ca. 530; cf. Kagan 2006, 56–58; Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007), Thracian Chersonese (ca. 515), Dicaea-by-

Abdera (ca. 515), Maroneia (ca. 510), Neapolis (ca. 500), and Selymbria (ca. 490). Soon after the west Pontic colonies copied the new fashion, first at Apollonia Pontica (ca. 480–475), later followed by Istrus (ca. 460) and Mesambria (ca. 450–440).

The issuing authorities employed different emblems and symbols (*parasemon*) on their coins, usually adapting types deriving from their foundation legends or those of their mother-cities: for example, the Thracian Chersonese elected to show the lion of Miletus, the mother-city of Kardias; Samothrace – sphinx on the obverse; Selymbria – a rooster; Dicaea – head of Heracles and a cock; Aenos – Hermes’ head and his caduceus, later replaced by a goat and xoanon on a throne; Abdera – a seated griffin, copied from its mother-city Teos (but facing left, not right); Maroneia – prancing horse and vine with bunches of grapes (of Dionysos); Neapolis – gorgoneion; Galepsos – the goat of Paros; Byzantium – a cow standing on dolphin; Apollonia Pontica – anchor and crayfish; Mesambria – helmet and wheel; Istrus – two male heads, one inverted (*Dioscuri*?) and an eagle attacking dolphin.

A number of factors influenced the expansion of coinage in Thrace, including: the availability of precious metals; profits from the export of raw materials and goods (e.g., ore, mined metal, construction materials, timber, pitch, honey, etc.); slave trade profits; wealth accumulated from agricultural production; a need for widely accepted means of payment; a need to store wealth/bullion from gift exchange, seizure, booty, taxation, and the like; as well as other internal social and political developments.

The Persian invasion in Europe in the late sixth century substantially influenced the need for money and triggered the opening of new mints in southern Thrace, eastern Macedonia, and Paeonia (see [Chapter 21](#); cf. Dahmen 2010, 43–47). A few coinages, such as the staters of “Lete” type (Psoma 2006, 61–85, attributed to Berge) and of “satyr carrying off a protesting nymph” type (attributed to early Thasos) that existed in this region before 513 (Draganov 2000, 46–50), probably served to pay the tribute of local tribes to the Persians (Gardner 1918, 193; Psoma 2012, 157). Such circumstances are well demonstrated by their presence in coin hoards (by definition, a hoard is “an aggregation of two or more coins (or other valuables) put away by their owner with the intent of recovery”: Metcalf 2012, 6–7) found in the Mediterranean,⁵ Lycia,⁶ Egypt,⁷ and the Levant.⁸ The coins in question were issued in the name of Thracian tribes (Derrones, Bisaltae, Edones, Orreskii, Tyntenoi) and Paeonian tribes (Ichnai, Laeai), and some of their kings (Getas of Edones [see [Figure 18.6.1](#)], Mosses of Bisaltae, Dokimos?), most of which are known to have existed only from their coinage. Large denominations (such as tetrastaters = dodecadrachms [ca. 39 g], decadrachms [ca. 32 g], triple staters = octodrachms [ca. 29 g]) were struck by local tribes, only rarely by coastal cities like Dicaea and Abdera, and were apparently intended for large-scale, international transactions. At the same

time, the existence of numerous silver fractions from the very beginning of civic mints in the area speaks in favor of an early development of urban centers and the use of coinage in everyday transactions (Kagan 2006, 52–57). The sophisticated fractional system and the coin iconography in southeastern Thrace (especially Dicaea, Abdera, Selymbria, and Thracian Chersonese) appear to be strongly influenced by the Achaemenid East.

The earliest coinages in the region west of the Hebros were struck on the so-called “Thraco-Macedonian” standard, a technical term to denote the fluctuations of a presumed local weight system, divided into three different series/groups (Raymond 1953; Lorber 2008). Its earlier weight was based on a silver stater of 9.82 g, representing 1/50 of the Babylonian light (Persian) silver mina (491 g), and was thus directly intended for trade and acceptance in Persia and the East (Raymond 1953, 23). Again, coin denominations follow the oriental division to thirds and sixths, but at the same time the Greek standard of obols and drachms was adapted (Draganov 2000, 41–44; Dahmen 2010, 44). Later, the local standard was reduced in weight to meet the average stater weight (9.40 g). In fact the two standards of drachms were implemented simultaneously: a heavy one, with a theoretical weight of 3.68 g, named “Raymond series 3,” and a “light” one, 3.27 g, called “Raymond series 2” (Draganov 2000, 42; Lorber 2008, 8–13).

After the Persian Wars only the coinages of the Derrones, Edones/Getas, Bisaltae/Mosses, and Orreskioi survived. By the late 460 s, the last remaining “Thraco-Macedonian” tribal coinages ceased to exist (Psoma 2012, 159) and may reflect the expansionist policy of the Macedonian king Alexander I (Draganov 2000, 49–51), who took control over the precious metal deposits in the Dysoron and Pangeium mountains (Hdt. 5.17). Concerning the distribution of “Thraco-Macedonian” coins, in particular the issues of the Derrones and Tyntenoi, they spread northward into Paeonia⁹ and western Thrace¹⁰ (Youroukova 1992, 11–20; Draganov 2000, 30–31; Prokopov 2007, 343–352).

In 1976 M. J. Price convincingly reattributed a few electrum coins, previously ascribed to the Ionian region, to the “Thraco-Macedonian” region (following Gardner 1918, 104–107 and Svoronos 1919, 187–197, pl. 16.), featuring: (1) “bull forepart left”;¹¹ (2) “bull right head reverted above floral symbol”;¹² (3) “two lions standing, heads reverted, between lotus flower”;¹³ (4) “cow right, kneeling and suckling calf”;¹⁴ and (5) “head of Herakles right, wearing lion’s skin.”¹⁵ They were all struck on the Milesian standard, most probably at Dicaea, Acanthus, and/or Ennea Hodoi (later Amphipolis), when these cities were sympathetic to the cause of the Ionian Revolt of 499–494.

The Classical period

Persian royal coinage, such as silver sigloi, reached the Pontic zone of Thrace

during the late fifth and first half of the fourth century. These coins are present in three fragmentary hoards dated to ca. 390–360 – one from Balchik-Kavarna area (CH 8.33), and two others of unknown provenance, supposedly from northeast Bulgaria. Persian gold darics are known in a hoard from Argamum near Tulcea in Dobrudja (Petac, Talmatçı, and Ionița 2011). Additionally, stray Persian coins have appeared occasionally in northeast Thrace (Odessus–Callatis area), including: two issues of Tissaphernes, the Persian satrap of Lydia and Caria (ca. 413–395); two of Memnon, satrap of Rhodes (ca. 350–336/4), kept in Varna museum; and a single tetradrachm of Samos dated to 375–370 from the Shumen fortress.

The inclusion of the northern Aegean and western Pontic coasts of Thrace into the Athenian naval empire (ca. 454–404; Apollonia appears in the tribute lists for the first time in 425/4, cf. IG I³ 71, iv.128) is well represented in the numismatic record. After the Pontic expedition of Pericles ca. 437/6 (Plut., Per. 20), the overall significance of coastal Thrace for maritime commerce and the grain trade greatly increased (Figueira 1998, 29–30, 515). The “staple” currency for these international transactions was the electrum stater (1 stater [ca. 16 g] = 28 drachms = 7 Athenian tetradrachms (Figueira 1998, 524–527)) of Cyzicus in Propontis (so-called “cyzicenes”), with the characteristic tuna-fish as identifying type on the obverse (von Fritze 1912, 1–38; de Callatay forthcoming), which soon flooded the area under study. Numerous finds of electrum cyzicenes from the western Pontic coast, as both hoards¹⁶ and stray finds unearthed in the choral of Apollonia Pontica, Mesambria, and Odessus (Gerassimov 1942, 77–78; Karayotov 2003) testify to the important economic role of Pontic Thrace. As a result of the expansion of the trade networks of coastal poleis into inner Thrace via the main rivers (Isaac 1986; de Boer 2010, 176–177) and inland routes, a significant supply of foreign currencies, especially cyzicenes, was present in the region. Currently a few hoards¹⁷ and over 30 single specimens are known from the regions of Sofia, Pazardjik, Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Haskovo, and Kurdjali, located near or along the Oskios/Oescus, Tonzos and Hebros rivers (Gerassimov 1942, 74–85; Laloux 1971, 36–39, 51–53). It is known that the Odrysian kings calculated their trade and taxation revenues in cyzicenes, until they were replaced by the gold staters of Philip II.

Around the same time another heavy “currency” (ca. 17.00 g) circulated along the west Pontic coast – the elegant silver tetradrachms of Apollonia Pontica struck in limited numbers between the late fifth and the middle of the fourth century (Figure 18.6.3).¹⁸ The rarity of this series (around 80 specimens known) indicates that they were minted in small quantity and obviously intended only for large transactions. Undoubtedly, both cyzicenes and tetradrachms of Apollonia served the needs of and payments for the grain trade in the Black Sea.

The most popular silver coins in Thrace during the late Archaic and Classical

period were the drachms (later hemidrachms) of Parion and Thracian Chersonese, nearly identical in style. It is very likely that the late hemidrachms of Parion and Thracian Chersonese were actually struck in a single, allied mint, as one hybrid issue from the Gorno Novo Selo hoard (IGCH 751) has revealed (Draganov 1993, 169–172). It seems that both series were discontinued sometime around 323/320, when the area became a dominion of Lysimachus, who established his own dynastic coinage (Tzvetkova 2004, 27). The distribution of hoards containing issues from Parion and Thracian Chersonese is densely concentrated in southern Thrace along the upper and middle courses of the Hebros and Tonzos rivers¹⁹ (Dimitrov 1989, 23–28; Tzvetkova 2004, 21–24). In the eastern zone hemidrachms of Parion and Thracian Chersonese were often associated in hoards with the reduced drachms of Apollonia Pontica,²⁰ a coin type that completely dominates along the coastal zone from Ahtopol/Sozopol in the south to Constanța/Tomis in the north in the fourth century down to the 330 s,²¹ rarely mixed with diobols of Mesambria (as listed in IGCH 734).

Further north in the Balkans, the drachms of Istrus were the principal local silver currency during the late fifth and entire fourth century. They appear en masse throughout northeastern Thrace, Dobrudja, and around the Danube delta and further north into modern Moldova.²² J. Hind suggested that the hoards of Istrus drachms are related to the Danubian slave trade, with Istrus serving as a leading slave export center in the Euxine basin (Hind 1994), an argument which should be further tested.

The distribution of silver issues of the island of Thasos, including Archaic fractions and Classical staters (in 390 changed to drachms and divided into three consecutive minting phases), was distinct. They are common in southwestern and central Thrace, especially along the upper and middle courses of the Hebros, Strymon, and Nestos rivers, where they served as the chief repository of value for the native population (Figueira 1998, 28). Obviously this is due not only to the proximity of the island, but also to the severe commercial impact of Thasos on its coastal peraia (Figueira 1998, 28, 79–80; Picard 2011, 291–292). Thasian issues and those of the so-called “Anonymous Thracian tribe”²³ have appeared as individual finds at sites like “Pistiros,”²⁴ Kozi gramadi,²⁵ Krustevich,²⁶ Pernik, Koprivlen, as well as in over 22 hoards.²⁷ It has been estimated that more than 1300 staters/drachms of “Naked ithyphallic satyr carrying in his arms a protesting nymph / quadripartite incuse square” type (see [Figure 18.6.2](#)) and over 400 smaller denominations of Thasos are known from southwestern Thrace (Prokopov 2007, 348). This type of stater/drachm, usually assigned to “Thasos,” was very popular in local markets and often imitated, sometimes as fourreés (plated coins), in central Thrace (Hebros valley) during the first half of the fourth century (Topalov 1998, 153–160). In the Rhodopes the role of Thasian currency was played by the coins of nearby cities of Maroneia (Schönert-

Geiss 1987) and Abdera (Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007), with the coinage of Maroneia particularly important especially in the fourth century and later again in the second and first centuries (Figueira 1998, 149; CCCHBulg 3 (2011), 18–20).

In the coins of Cyzicus, Thracian Chersonese and Parion, Thasos, Maroneia, and Abdera one can see distinctive markers of the economic influence and penetration of the Aegean and Propontic poleis into inner Thrace, which was a result of trade activities, including the extraction of raw materials and goods exported to the south in the Classical period. The coin evidence suggests that Thasos held a dominant economic position (compare with imports of Thasian amphorae: [Chapter 27](#)). By contrast, in western Thrace²⁸ the silver issues of Paeonia were distributed, including tetradrachms of the cities (Damastium and Pellagia; May 1939) and, more often, of Paeonian kings:²⁹ Lyceius (ca. 359/8–340/335), Teutamados (ca. 360?),³⁰ Patraus (340/335–ca. 316/5), and Diplaios (ca. 316/5), most of whom are known (except Lyceius) only from their coinage.

The rise of the Macedonian kingdom after 350 (see [Chapters 5, 22](#)) brought a major change to the monetary system of the Balkan peninsula (Draganov 2000; Dahmen 2010, 51–55). With the invasions of Philip II into inner Thrace (352/1, 342–340) and Alexander's marches (340, 335), the southern area was conquered and organized almost as a "satrapy" following the Achaemenid model that existed by the late 320s (Diod. 16.71; 17.62.5; Arr. Anab. 7.9.3; Hornblower 1994, 95). Philip II and Alexander's bimetallic coinage, based on the Attic weight standard (gold in 348/7, silver after 333: Price 1991, 27–29, 85–89), quickly began to penetrate into Thrace, a tendency that grows more dominant after 323, when the discharged veterans from Alexander's army returned home. By 320–315 all non-Macedonian silver and gold/electrum coins (e.g., Parion, Thracian Chersonese, Cyzicus, Thasos, Istrus, Mesambria, and Apollonia, among others) literally disappeared from circulation. Macedonian royal coins virtually accomplished the monetization of inland Thrace, particularly in areas distant from main routes and settlements.

The Hellenistic period

The bronze coinage of the Macedonian kings – issues of Philip II (mainly posthumous) and Alexander the Great (lifetime and posthumous) – had a great monetary impact on early Hellenistic Thrace. It appeared in vast numbers in the area and was frequently hoarded (Price 1991, 65–66, 173; Draganov 2000, 94–6; Psoma 2009, 12–16).³¹ This phenomenon has been explained recently by the use of bronze coins to pay the soldiers' daily stipend for meals (sitōs/sitarchia), usually in advance (Psoma 2009; Nankov 2009, 272), a common Hellenistic practice of army payment. It has also been proposed that numerous finds of bronze Macedonian coins at key sites, such as Seuthopolis (Dimitrov 1987, 1–4),³² Cabyle,³³ "Pistiros,"³⁴ and Pernik,³⁵ are directly related to the

presence of Macedonian garrisons in southern Thrace (Nankov 2009, 270–276).

Macedonian royal coinage in silver became the most popular currency in Thrace and the northern Balkans after ca. 330–320. While Philip II's silver coinage was produced in the light Chalcidian standard and therefore had a narrow geographic circulation in Macedonia, Paeonia, and Thrace, the "international" silver of Alexander, struck on the Attic weight standard (1 drachm = 4.3 g, tetradrachm of ca. 17.20 g) at more than 26 mints and in enormous quantities during his lifetime, was to become the main currency unit in the eastern Mediterranean for the next 200–250 years. As M. Price pointed out, Macedonian silver "had a tremendous impact on the monetary system of the area, with the result that the Celts regularly demanded payment in this [Alexander's] type of coinage, and later that they struck imitations of it locally" (1991, 66). Tetradrachms of posthumous Alexander type were minted in Thrace (mainly at Mesambria and Odessus, and briefly at Cabyle, Dionysopolis, and Callatis) down to the coming of Rome in 72/1; they freely circulated into the 40s.

Along with the silver (tetradrachms and drachms)³⁶ of Alexander the Great, his gold coinage (staters and distaters)³⁷ also traveled actively to Thrace and was intensively hoarded (Dimitrov 1987, 103–116; Dimitrov 1996; Rousséva 1990, 18–21; Draganov 2000, 104–105). These silent caches of buried wealth should clearly be associated with wages of discharged soldiers and mercenaries (as suggested by the presence of gold struck in east Mediterranean mints, see Draganov 2001, 98), with booty/seizure, military treasury (e.g., IGCH 410–411: Rezhanci hoard), or civic savings (IGCH 796: Varna/Odessus hoard – ca. 1000 staters!), which were never recovered in antiquity.

In 323 Thrace was entrusted to Lysimachus, one of the most energetic of Alexander's generals and his former bodyguard, who devoted himself to the defense and security of the area (Will 1984, 28; Draganov 2001, 55–69). He would become a master of the region, with varying success, for the next 42 years. In 309 Lysimachus established his capital city at Lysimacheia in the Thracian Chersonese, where he opened a new mint (bronze and small silver: Thompson 1968, 168–169). In his lifetime, and especially between ca. 297/6 and 281,³⁸ Lysimachus organized the production of an enormous coinage in silver and gold (Thompson 1968, 165–182; Draganov 2001, 61–65) with a magnificent head of deified Alexander wearing the horns of Ammon on the obverse and a seated Athena Nicephorus on the reverse (de Callatay 2012, 181). During his reign, great state wealth was accumulated, partially from the profits of the Pontic grain trade under his powerful control. It is said that Lysimachus' treasury was kept at the acropolis of Pergamum by Philetairos, the future founder of the Attalid kingdom (Strabo 13.4.1; Paus. 1.4.10) – some 9,000 talents (ca. 230 tons of silver). A large proportion of Lysimachus'

coinage was exported to the north in Thrace (Draganov 1993, 103; Fischer-Bossert 2005).³⁹ It was popular in the Pontic region and so continued to be struck posthumously for the next 200 years, mainly at Chalcedon and Byzantium, as late as ca. 75/4 (de Callatay 1997; Marinescu 2004).

In the second and third quarters of the third century, southeastern and coastal Thrace experienced the strong influence of the Seleucid Empire. In February 281, the Syrian king Seleucus I had won the Thracian Chersonese and other cities in southern Thrace by defeating Lysimachus at Corupedium (Polyb. 18.51.3–6; Will 1984, 113). After Lysimachus' death Thrace quickly disintegrated and, under the pressure of foreign invasions, was separated according to the interests of mighty Hellenistic monarchies. Numismatic anarchy was a result, but the monetary system remained firmly based on the Alexander-type tetradrachm.

Meanwhile, there was Celtic expansion into the Balkans ca. 279–277, which left much of Macedonia, Illyria, and Thrace in ruins (Will 1984, 114–117). Celtic raiders certainly traveled along the Hebros valley and burnt a number of sites such as “Pistiros,” where a remarkable hoard (552 gold and silver coins) was buried with a t.p.q. of 281/0.⁴⁰ By the end of 277, Celtic forces were ambushed and massacred near Lysimacheia by Antigonus Gonatas, the new king of Macedonia (Just. 25.1.1–3; Will 1984, 116). Gonatas then ceded Thrace east of the Nestos river to the Syrian king Antiochus I, according to a mutual settlement.

The successors of Seleucus I looked upon Thrace as an area won by the spear and this brought Antiochus II Theos and later Antiochus III the Great into the region (Grainger 1996). Between 255 and 253, Thracian campaigns of Antiochus II are attested in the literary (Polyaen. Strat. 4.16) and epigraphic record (inscriptions from Apollonia (IGBulg I² 388), Callatis, and Istrus (Psoma, Karadima, and Terzopoulou 2008, 226–228)). Seleucid control of Thrace is also clear in the numismatic record (Youroukova 1992, 150; Peter 1997, 170; Draganov 1993, 64). To date more than 250 bronze coins of Antiochus II minted in Sardes have been found in Cabyle and its vicinity (Draganov 1993, 57–59, 143–144), 19 from Maroneia (Psoma et al. 2008, 226), with smaller numbers known from Abdera, Seuthopolis (Dimitrov and Penchev, 73, no. 936), 2–3 in Aquae Calidae, Apollonia Pontica, finds from Nova Zagora, the Yambol area, and the Shumen area, among other find spots. Additional Seleucid coins in gold and silver are known from hoards in Thrace,⁴¹ stray finds, and collections. In addition, a large number of Antiochus II's bronzes were overstruck at Lysimacheia (hoards IGCH 1298 and CH 9.188; Psoma et al. 2008, 226); others (74+ specimens) were countermarked at Cabyle with the civic monogram or with the figure of Artemis Phosphorus (Draganov 1993, 58, 136–143, 157, pls 33–34; Houghton and Lorber 2002, 173, 184). The presence of such a quantity of bronze coins of Antiochus II in inner Thrace should once again be interpreted as *sitarchia*,

the daily allowance money of the Seleucid soldiers, which was spent locally (Psoma et al. 2008, 228, also noted in Draganov 1993, 64–65). In addition to Lysimacheia, Lampsacus, and Abydos, both Antiochus II and Antiochus Hierax appear to have struck tetradrachms at Istrus during the 240–230s (Marinescu and Lorber 2012, 236–238).

From ca. 260 onward, a certain Adaios, Macedonian by origin and perhaps a general of Antiochus II, minted numerous bronze coins in his name (six types, some in Seleucid iconography). They were struck most probably at Cypsela (cf. Athen. 11.469a) or Maroneia (Psoma et al. 2008, 236–237; Psoma 2009, 32–33), and actively circulated in southern Thrace⁴² (Peter 1997, 236–248; Manov 1999, 27–8; Psoma et al. 2008, 231–233). Adaios was put to death at Cypsela ca. 246/5 on the orders of Ptolemy III Euergetes (Pomp. Trog. Prol. 27). After this episode and the closure of Third Syrian War (246–241), the Seleucid territories in southern Thrace came under Ptolemaic control (Heinen 1984, 420–421; Youroukova 1992, 151–152; Peter 1997, 246–248), which lasted until the end of the third century; as a result, new commercial routes were opened and the economic potential of Thrace grew stronger.

Both the archaeological record (Emilov 2010; see [Chapter 24](#)) and numismatic data suggest that certain Celtic groups permanently settled in Thrace and established local enclaves after 279. A hoard from the Vidin area, Slana Bara 1940 (IGCH 454),⁴³ reveals this well: it contains a remarkable collection of more than 160 silver coins (mostly Macedonian and early Hellenistic tetradrachms with their early imitations), concealed sometime around ca. 270–250, most likely an echo of the Celtic invasion in 280–277. The same applies to hoard Tvarditsa 1969 (CH 9.190), near Sliven, and other hoards of Celtic nature from the central Balkans.⁴⁴ It is known that the wealthy city of Byzantium, which controlled trade in the Straits, had to pay a yearly tribute to the Celts, which rose up to 80 talents (ca. 2,044 kg of silver) in the 230s (Polyb. 4.46.4).

In fact the Celtic kingdom of Tylis is best known through Cavarus, the last of its rulers (ca. 240/230–218 or 213). His silver coinage of Alexander-type was minted at Cabyle, most often marked only with the figure of Artemis Phosphorus (Gerassimov 1958; Draganov 1993, 75–86, 158–159, nos. 845–861, 878–902; Price 1991, 174–175, nos. 882–889) or rarely stating his name in the genitive (Price 1991, pl. 158.1; Draganov 1993, 77, nos. 862–877). The bronze coins of Cavarus are issued in four main types, again struck at Cabyle and in Apros, with the largest denomination, “head of Apollo right / Nike”⁴⁵ overwhelmingly prevailing over the remaining three types. It is now regarded as certain that Cavarus commissioned the mint of Cabyle to strike tetradrachms for him, but Cabyle, a bronze mint, had to request dies from one of the established silver mints, presumably the closest, Mesambria (Gerassimov 1958, 274–275; Draganov 1993, 79–80; Marinescu and Lorber 2012, 227). Similar Alexander-type tetradrachms issued in the name of

Orsoaltios (Peter 1997, 249; Wartenberg and Kagan 1999, 406, no. 97) and Kersibaulos (Price 1991, 173, pl. 108.j; SNG BM Black Sea 308; Peter 1997, 250) are known only by their coinage existing in a few specimens each; they seem to predate Cavarus' reign.

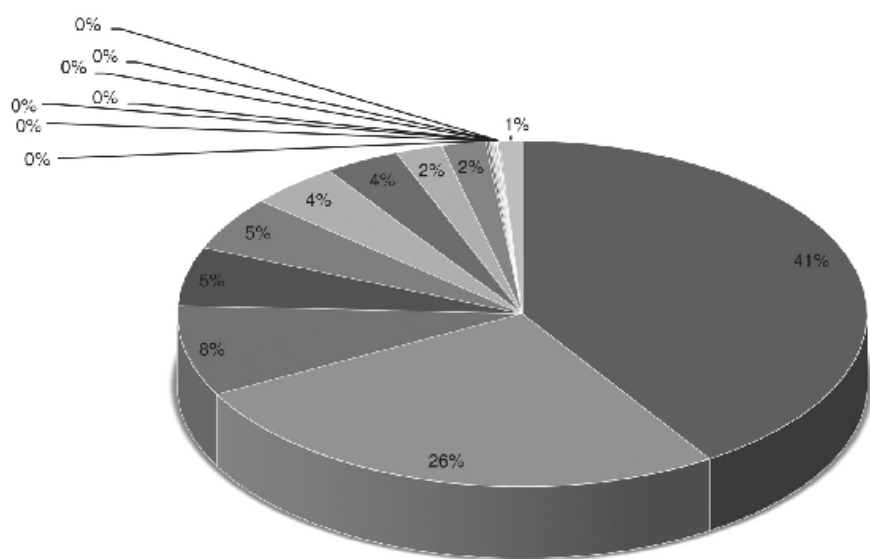
Although the kingdom of Tylis was conquered in a Thracian revolt against Cavarus' rule ca. 218 or 213 (Gerassimov 1958, 275; Lazarov 2010), the Celtic coinages did not disappear from the region. Indeed, other coinages of distinctive Celtic style were known in northern Thrace and along the lower Danube ca. 150–90/80s (Price 1991, 506).⁴⁶ The imitative silver coinages of Macedonian types (coins of "Philip II," "Alexander III," and "Philip III Arrhidaeus"), are easily distinguishable by their strong barbarization/stylization of the original Macedonian coin design (Draganov 2001, 38–41), the lack (or corruption) of the original Greek legend, reduction in the size of the flans, and debasement of the metal (about 55–62% silver, 31–40% copper). For instance, a heavy concentration of the so-called "Sattelpferdkopf"-type (also called "Virteju-București") imitation tetradrachms is documented in the region around Russe in northeast Bulgaria, including some 12 hoards amounting to over 1300 coins (a full account in Paunov forthcoming a).

The late Hellenistic period in Thrace is marked by a great variety and mixture of coin denominations and issuing authorities, as a result of political instability and changing centers of power.⁴⁷ Among the coin types most frequently found are: coins of the last Macedonian kings Philip V and Perseus (Draganov 2001, 99–121); tetradrachms of Thasos, Thasian type (Prokopov 2006; de Callataÿ 2008, de Callataÿ 2012) and Thasian imitations (Prokopov 2012, 337–344); the First and Second Macedonian Regions (Prokopov 2012); Alexander-type tetradrachms of Mesambria and Odessus (Karayotov 1994; de Callataÿ 1997); "New Style" Athenian tetradrachms, tetradrachms of Maroneia (Schönert–Geiss 1987); Macedonian provincial tetradrachms struck in the name of Aesillas (Bauslaugh 2000), the Roman legates Q. Bruttius Sura and CAE•PR (de Callataÿ 1998, 113–115); drachms of Apollonia and Dyrrhachium Illyriae; Lysimachos-type tetradrachms of Byzantium (de Callataÿ 1997, 120–137; Marinescu 2004); gold staters of Mithridates Eupator struck at Tomis, Callatis (Price 1991, 173–174; de Callataÿ 1997, 139–150), and Byzantium; and rare coin types such as the tetradrachms of Abydos and Tenedos, of Ilium and Alexandria Troas (Paunov 2013a), cistophori of Asia Minor (Paunov 2011), and even Ptolemaic coins of Egypt.⁴⁸ Around ca. 90/80–50/40, enormous quantities of Roman Republican denarii were supplied into Thrace and in the Danubian zone (Crawford 1985; Lockyear 2007; Paunov and Prokopov 2002), marking the increasing influence of Rome on Balkan affairs.

In order to meet the need for fresh money in Thrace, described by M. H. Crawford as "an area hungry for precious metal" (1985, 227), the Roman

provincial administration of Macedonia instigated the production of coinages on a Hellenistic standard and with Greek lettering between ca. 146 and 80/75. They were well recognized by the population of the inland Balkans, which had been accustomed to tetradrachms since the time of Philip II and Alexander the Great. Thus, in essence, the tetradrachms of Thasos and Maroneia, as well as the Macedonian Districts, were not a “civic” coinage but Roman provincial coins (“römisches Geld im griechischen Gewand”) struck in Macedonia and coastal Thrace to be used in a military setting (Prokopov 2006, 17–20). For deliberate reasons (fiscal and commercial) the Roman authorities of Macedonia and Achaia actively promoted all currencies based on the Attic weight standard: they insisted that all public transactions and taxes be paid in attikas [drachmas].⁴⁹ This is well attested in hoard evidence, in inscriptions,⁵⁰ and in written sources. Polybius himself speaks of this “promotion” (21.43.19–21). In this way the Romans substantially profited from the weight difference between the denarius (3.90 g) and the Attic drachm (4.2–4.3 g), which resulted in a stable profit of 1.2–1.6 g, or 9–10%, for a single tetradrachm transaction. In Achaia, for instance, the conversion from denarius to drachm was strategically not regulated before the time of Augustus, in 27.⁵¹

All Greek-type silver coinages in south Thrace and Macedonia were discontinued by the Romans ca. 75–71, although they continued to circulate freely within the region. Due to the lack of newly minted silver issues on the market, the communities (especially in southern Thrace) began to make imitations, most of which copied the well-known and cherished coinage of Thasos. Many hoards and finds of the period ca. 60s to late 40s are comprised predominantly of this imitative type (Lukanc 1996). [Figures 18.1–18.2](#) offer a synoptic view of numismatics in Thrace ca. 150–30/20.



■ Tetradrachms of Thasos and Thasian type - 11600	■ Roman Republican Denari - 7500
■ Tetradrachms of Athens 'New Style' - 2400	■ Tetradrachms of questor Aesillas - 1560
■ Tetradrachms of Byzantium and Chalchedon - 1440	■ Tetradrachms of First Macedonian Region - 1200
■ Tetradrachms of Mesambria and Odessos - 1000	■ Tetradrachms and bronzes of Maroneia - 623
■ Celtic imitations of Macedonian types - 590	■ Cistophori of Asia - 36
■ Drachms of Dyrrhachium and Apollonia - 30	■ Tetradrachms of Abydos and Tenedos - 40
■ Tetradrachms of Ptolemaic Egypt - 24	■ Tetradrachms of Ilium and Alexandria - 12
■ Dacian imitations of RRD - 10	■ Macedonian bronze coins - 23
■ Thracian royal coins (AR + AE) - 304	

Figure 18.1 Distribution of coin types in southern Thrace (between Haemus and the Aegean Sea), ca. 150–30/20 BCE (ratio; silver units (based on SIG3 729) in key). Chart by E. Paunov. Data and quantities are based on the Bulgarian reports of hoards (ca. 1900–1982), IGCH, CH, and author's sources, ca. 100 coin hoards included.

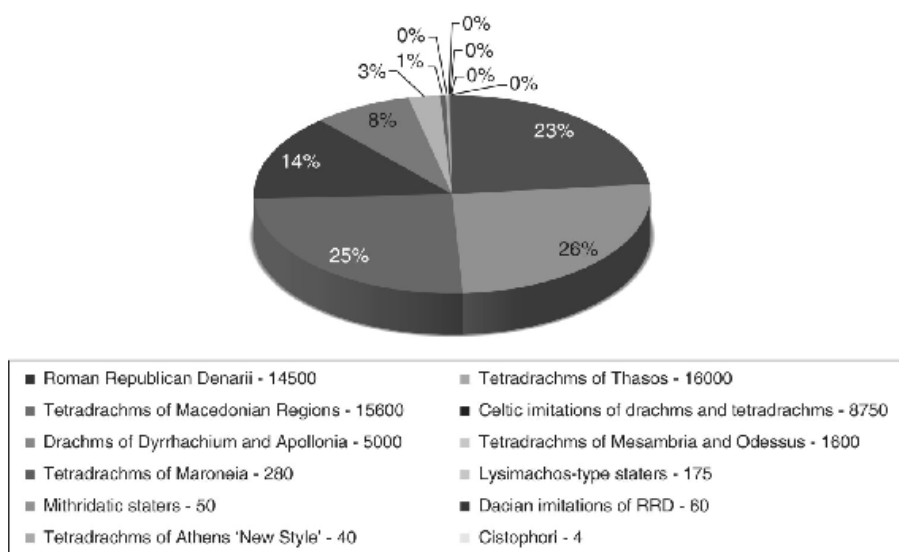


Figure 18.2 Distribution of coin types in northern Thrace (between Haemus and the Danube River), ca. 150–30/20 BCE (ratio; silver units (based on SIG3 729) in key). Chart by E. Paunov. Data are based on the Bulgarian reports of coin hoards, IGCH, and CH. More than 160 hoards included.

The transition in monetary system from late Hellenistic to Roman currency was smooth and easy, without major interruptions or deficiency of coin supply. Any shortage was quickly compensated by the denarius (Paunov and Prokopov 2002; Paunov forthcoming a). Complete Roman political and economic control is marked by the final disappearance of the tetradrachm (and its imitations) in Thrace ca. 18/15–11/10, perhaps following a special Roman regulation of the currency in circulation (details in Paunov forthcoming a). The Roman denarius would now be dominant in Thrace for the next 250 years.

18.4 Thracian Coinage: Royal and Tribal

The coinage of Thracian kings and dynasts has been treated in detail in many previous studies (e.g., Youroukova 1976, 1992; Peter 1997; Topalov 1994) and thus will only be briefly discussed here. Although intriguing, this coinage was of limited output and had a moderate impact on the overall pool of money in circulation in Thrace from the fifth century to the middle of the first century CE. The available statistical data, collected in [Table 18.2](#) and [Figure 18.5](#), demonstrate that such coinage should be regarded more as a powerful symbolic claim made by the kings of Thrace, rather than as a regular coinage with economic value/weight. It seems logical that these coinages, which were produced sporadically, circulated in limited areas, and not in great number

(except for Seuthes III and Rhoemetaces I), were minted only at the time of the king's accession to demonstrate his authority, but not throughout the whole reign. The total evidence in hand, however, is still insufficient and cannot yet support a comprehensive discussion; the sequence of rulers and their coin issues remains uncertain in some cases.

Such coinage, however, can be arranged in a relative chronology according to the dynastic stemma of the Thracian royal houses (see [Figures 18.3–18.4](#)), as follows: (1) Early, or Odrysian – from Sparadokos (ca. 460/445–435) down to Ketriporis (ca. 357/6–352/1) and Teres II (351–341) – with a variety of types issued by powerful kings, actively minted in silver (most on Attic standard) and numerous bronze; (2) Middle – from Seuthes III (323–ca. 298/7) to Skostocus (ca. 285–277, or 275–260/255), including Adaïos and Cavarus – typical Hellenistic, only bronze, with exceptions for Skostocus and Cavarus; (3) Late – from Mostis (ca. 138–101/100: see de Callatay 1991; Paunov forthcoming b) and Dixazelmeus to the last three rulers named Rhoemetaces (12/11 BCE to 45/6 CE: see Paunov 2013b, 117–123) – typical late Hellenistic in style and iconography, and increasingly influenced by Roman coinage near the end of this period.

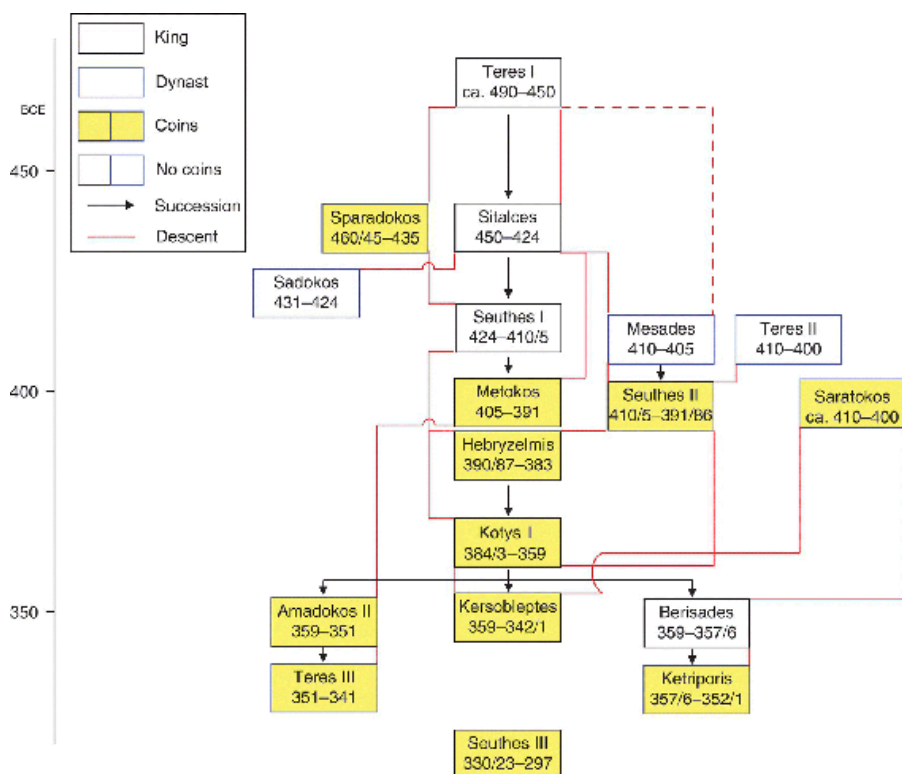


Figure 18.3 Stemma of the early Thracian kings; rulers who issued coins are shaded (adapted after Hourmouziadis 2009).

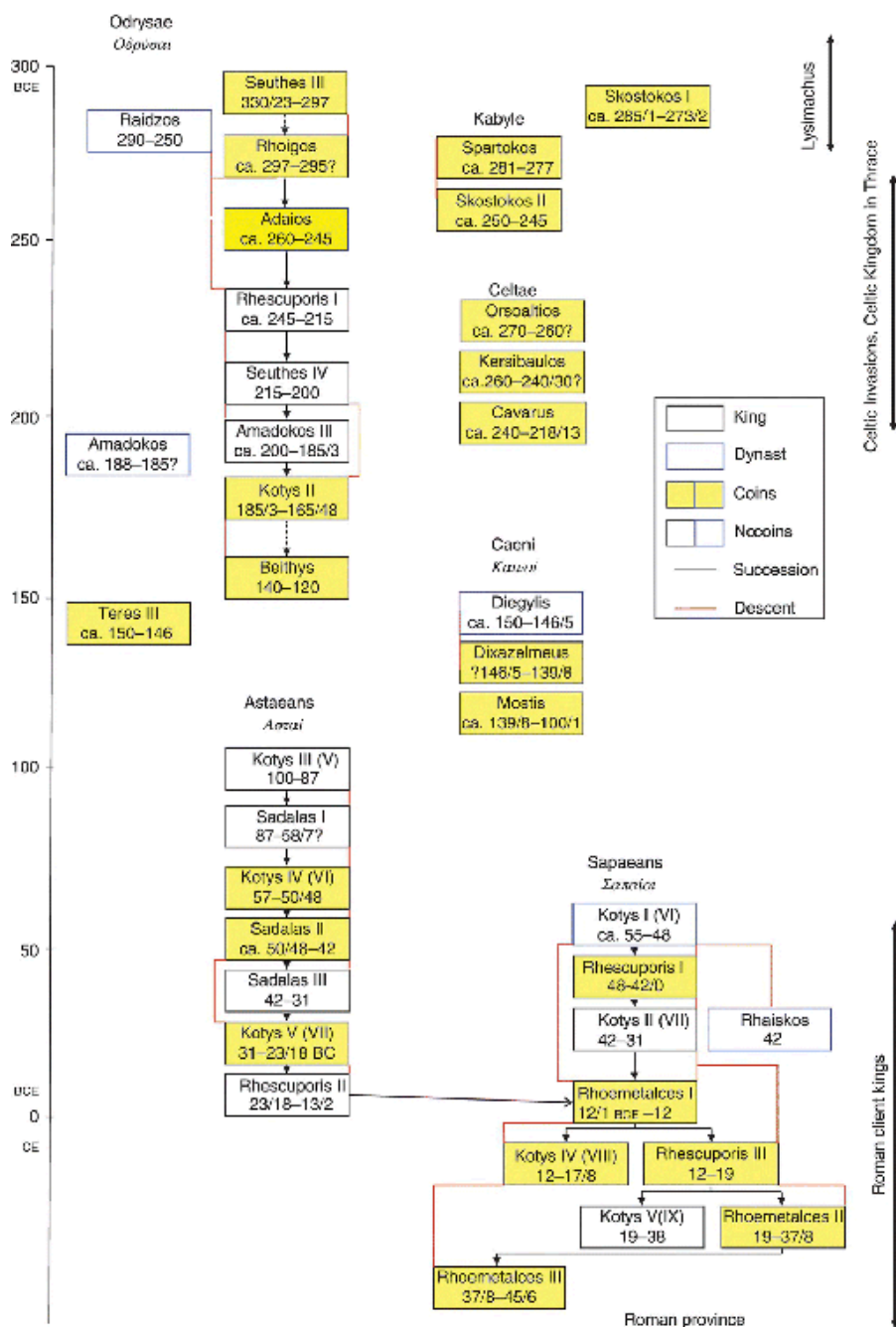


Figure 18.4 Stemma of the late Thracian kings; rulers who issued coins are shaded (adapted after Hourmouziadis 2009).

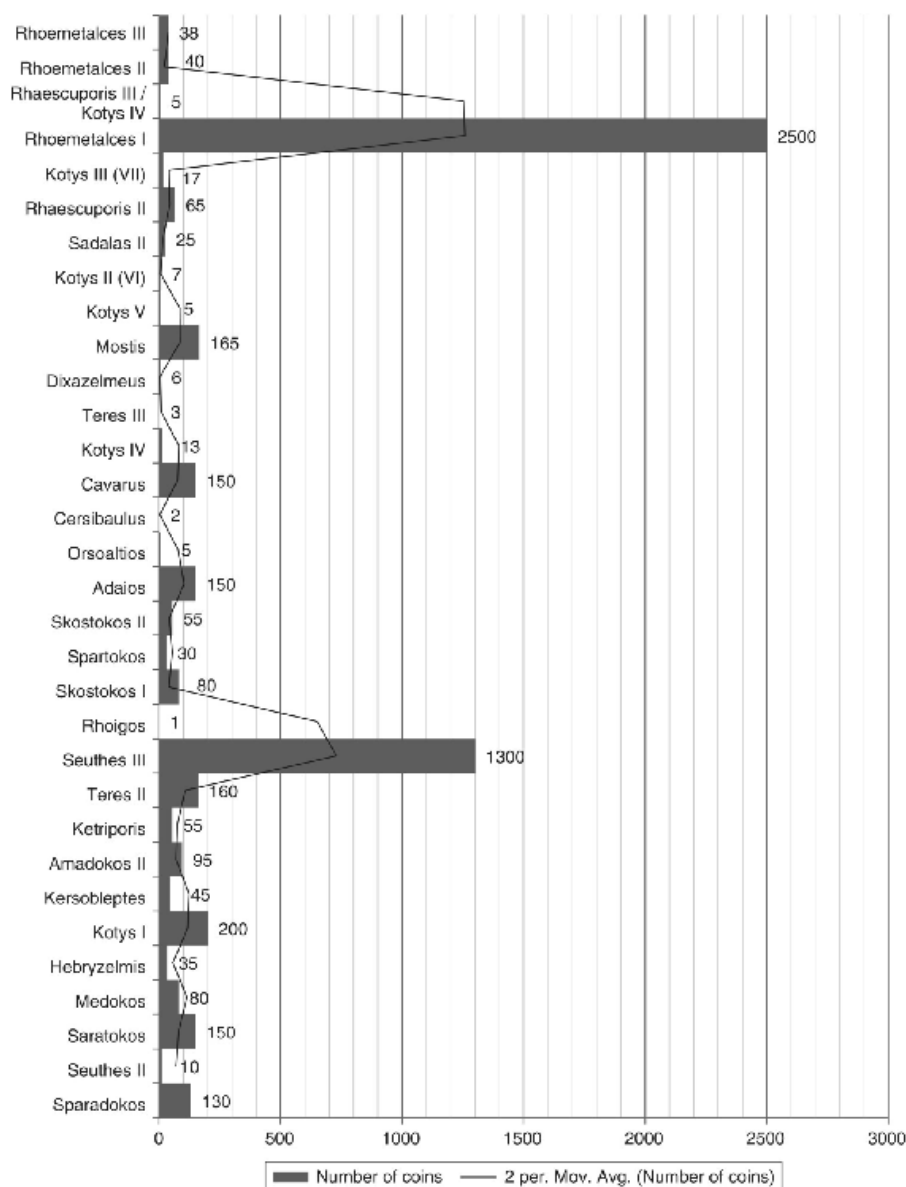


Figure 18.5 Thracian kings and dynasts; output of coinage (extant statistics, author E. Paunov).

From the very beginning, the coins of Thracian kings were produced in civic mints on the Aegean littoral (May 1966, 8, 186 n. 3; Schönert-Geiss 1972, 6; Schönert-Geiss 1987, 7; Peter 1997). This was mostly undertaken (see Table 18.1) at Cypsela (main mint of Odrysian kings), Ainos, Maroneia, Abdera, more rarely in Thasos. It is possible that a distinct group of bronze coins – characterized by very thick flans (up to 8–10.5 mm) and the use of smaller dies, and issued by some fourth-century Odrysian rulers (Metokos/Medokos, Kotys I, and Amadokos II) – was produced locally in a mint near the course of

the upper Hebros (location uncertain: see Topalov 1994, 52–56; 1998, 230–248). Only a dozen Thracian rulers in a five-century period issued their own coins in silver: Sparadokos, Seuthes II, Saratokos, Metokos/Medokos, Kotys I (Figure 18.6.4), Amadokos II, Skostokos I, and Cavarus; and, in the late period, Mostis, Kotys III (VII) (type KTΘO Σ XAPAKTHP),⁵² and Rhoemetalkes I (Figure 18.6.8). In most cases, this is indicative of the subordinate position of Thracian kings to the powers of the day.

Table 18.1 Cities in Thrace that minted coins.

Area / mint	Beginning of coinage	Archaic	Classical	Hellenistic	Thracian	Roman Provincial	Roman Imperial	Late Roman
<i>Coastal Thrace</i>								
Byzantium	ca. 416 BC	—	Δ, AR	Δ, AR, AV	Δ, AR	Δ	—	—
Selymbria	ca. 490 BC	AR	AR	—	—	Δ	Δ	Δ, BR
Pompehus / Heraclea	ca. 380 BC	—	Δ	—	—	Δ	—	—
Bisaulis	ca. 281–270 BC	—	—	Δ	—	—	—	—
Thracian Chersonese	ca. 513–493 BC	AR	Δ, AR	—	—	—	—	—
Cardia	ca. 346 BC	—	Δ	—	—	—	—	—
Lysimachia	309/8 BC	—	—	Δ, AR	—	—	—	—
Flaviopolis / Cene	ca. 117–120 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Critone	ca. 357–350 BC	—	Δ	Δ	—	—	—	—
Flaoius	ca. 357–350 BC	—	Δ	Δ	—	—	—	—
Madynis	ca. 357–380 BC	—	Δ	—	—	—	—	—
Serres	ca. 350–320 BC	—	Δ	Δ, AR	—	Δ	—	—
Alouktonion	ca. 357–380 BC	—	Δ	Δ	—	—	—	—
Agosspotami	ca. 400–300 BC	—	Δ	Δ	—	—	—	—
Ainos	ca. 400 BC	—	Δ, AR, AV	Δ, AR	Δ, AR	Δ	—	—
Diraca	ca. 510–490 BC	AR	AR, EL	—	—	—	—	—
Abdera	ca. 510–520 BC	AR	Δ, AR, AV	—	AR	Δ	—	—
Maroneia	ca. 510 BC	AR	Δ, AR, AV	Δ, AR	Δ	Δ	—	—
Zona	ca. 350 BC	—	Δ	Δ	—	—	—	—
Orinagoria	ca. 348 BC	—	Δ, AR	—	—	—	—	—
Samarrae	ca. 500–480 BC	AR	AR	Δ, AR	—	—	—	—
Thasos	ca. 525–500 BC	AR	Δ, AR, AV	Δ, AR	Δ, AR	Δ	—	—
Calipso	ca. 480 BC	AR	AR	Δ, AR	—	—	—	—
Neapolis	ca. 500–490 BC	AR	Δ, AR	—	—	—	—	—
Amphipolis	ca. 420 BC	—	Δ, AR, AV	Δ, AR, AV	?	Δ	—	—
Thicus	ca. 450 BC	—	AR	—	—	—	—	—
Berge	ca. 410–400 BC	—	Δ, AR	—	—	—	—	—
Apollonia	ca. 480–475 BC	AR	case, Δ, AR, AV	Δ, AR	—	Δ	—	—
Anchialus	ca. 130–138 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Mesambria	ca. 150 BC	—	Δ, AR	Δ, AR, AV	—	Δ	—	—
Odessus	ca. 360 BC	—	Δ	Δ, AR, AV	—	Δ	—	—
Dionysopolis	ca. 360 BC	—	Δ	Δ, AR	—	Δ	—	—
Callis	ca. 300–280 BC	—	—	Δ, AR, AV	—	Δ	—	—
Tomis	ca. 281 BC	—	—	Δ, AR, AV	—	Δ	—	—
Istrus	ca. 460 BC	—	case, Δ, AR	Δ, AR, AV	—	Δ	—	—
<i>Inland Thrace</i>								
Cyrcula	ca. 400 BC	—	Δ	—	Δ, AR	—	—	—
Bizye	ca. 10 BC, again from 117–119 BC	—	—	—	Δ	Δ	—	—
Apros	ca. 250–210 BC	—	—	Δ	Δ	—	—	—
Deulium	100 BC, again from 211	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Hadrianopolis	125–130 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Plinaiopolis	161 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Calyle	ca. 281–275 BC	—	—	Δ, AR	Δ, AR	—	—	—
Augusta Trutana	162–163 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Trajanopolis	150–161 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Topirus	ca. 140–115 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Neopolis ad Nesum	180–192 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Philippopolis	88/79 BC	—	—	Δ	Δ	Δ	—	—
Serdica	166–169 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Panagla	157–158 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Marcianopolis	187 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—
Nicopolis ad Istrum	142–114 BC	—	—	—	—	Δ	—	—

Table 18.2 Kings and dynasts of Thrace who minted their own coins (dates bce unless stated).

Ruler / issuer	Date of coinage	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Mint/s	Extant specimens
Sparadokos	ca. 460/445–435	—	AR	—	Lower Hebros–Ainos?	ca. 130

Seuthes II	ca. 410/415–391/386	–	AR	–	Ainos?	ca. 10
Saratokos	ca. 410–400	Æ	AR	–	Thasos and Maroneia	ca. 150
Metokos / Medokos	ca. 405–ca. 391	Æ	AR	–	Maroneia	45 / 35+
Hebryzmia	ca. 390/387–383	Æ	–	–	Kypsela	35+
Kotys I	ca. 384/3–359	Æ	AR	–	Kypsela	100+ / ~95
Kersobleptes	ca. 359–342/1	Æ	–	–	Kypsela	ca. 45
Amadokos II	ca. 359–351	Æ	AR	–	Maroneia / Thracian Chersonese; inner Thrace?	ca. 90 / 4
Ketriporis	ca. 357/6–352/1	Æ	–	–	Western Thrace	ca. 55
Teres II	ca. 351–341	Æ	–	–	Maroneia	ca. 160
Seuthes II	ca. 323–297	Æ	–	–	Seuthopolis	300+
Lysimachus	ca. 309/8–281	Æ	AR	AV	Lysimacheia, Sestos, Aenos, Perinthus, Abydus, Lampsacus, etc.	Tens of thousands
Rhoigos	ca. 297–295	Æ	–	–	Seuthopolis?	3+
Skostokos I	ca. 285/281–273/2	–	AR	–	Aenos	80+
Spartokos	ca. 281–277	Æ	–	–	Cabyle	ca. 30
Skostokos II	ca. 250–245	Æ	–	–	Cabyle	55+
Adaïos (as <i>strategos</i> of	ca. 260–245	Æ	–	–	Aenos or Maroneia?	ca. 150

Antiochus II)						
Orsoaltios	ca. 270–260	–	AR	–	Unknown	5
Kersibaulos	ca. 260–240/30	–	AR	–	Apros?	2
Cavarus	ca. 240/230–218 or 213	Æ	AR	–	Cabyle, Apros	~130 / 20
Kotys IV	ca. 185/183–165	Æ	–	–	Unknown	5 (or 13+)
Teres III	ca. 150–148	Æ	–	–	Unknown	3+
Dixazelmeus	ca. 141–139/8?	Æ	–	–	Bisanthe, Parion?	6+
Mostis	ca. 139/8–101/0	Æ	AR	–	Byzantium / Bisanthe, Parion?	~110 / 55
Kotys V	ca. 100–87?	Æ	–	–	Unknown	ca. 5
Kotys II (VI)	ca. 57–50/48	Æ	–	–	Bizye?	ca. 7
Sadalas II	ca. 50/48–43/2?	Æ	–	–	Bizye?	ca. 25
Rhaescuporis I (with Kotys)	ca. 48–42/40	Æ	–	–	Abdera ?	ca. 65
Kotys III (VII)	ca. 31–23/2?	–	AR	–	Southeastern Thrace	7
Rhoemetaces I	ca. 12/1 BCE –12 CE	Æ	AR	–	Byzantium, Bizye	~2500/ 13
Rhaescuporis III and Kotys IV (VIII)	ca. 12–17/18 ce	Æ	–	–	Bizye?	ca. 5
Rhoemetaces II	ca. 37/8 ce	Æ	–	–	Bizye	ca. 40
Rhoemetaces III	ca. 45/8 ce	Æ	–	–	Unknown	ca. 38



Figure 18.6 Coinage. 1. Getas, king of Edones, ca. 479–460 BCE, silver oktodrachm (34 mm, 28.99 g).

Photo courtesy of Gorny & Mosch 291 (March 10, 2014), no. 106.

2. Thasos, ca. 480–463 BCE, silver stater (22 mm, 8.60 g).

Photo courtesy of Triton XIII (January 4–5, 2010), no. 92.

3. Apollonia Pontica, ca. 400–350 BCE, silver tetradrachm, magistrate Kleokrates (16.94 g).

Photo courtesy of Triton XIII (January 4–5, 2010), no. 89.

4. Kotys I, 384/3–359 BCE, silver obol (1.03 g).

Photo courtesy of Gorny & Mosch 191 (October 11, 2010), no. 1202.

5. Amatokos II, ca. 389–380 BCE, bronze (20 mm, 15.64 g).

6. Dantheletae, ca. 340–335 BCE, bronze (15.83 g).

Photo courtesy of Numismatik Lanz 150 (December 13, 2010), no. 71.

7. Thracian tetradrachm ΘΠΑΚΩΝ, ca. 80–75 BCE (32 × 33 mm, 16.60 g).

Photo courtesy of Freeman & Sear, Manhattan sale II (January 4, 2011), no. 35.

8. Silver drachm of Rhoemetalces I with Augustus, ca. 11–10 BCE (19 mm, 3.93 g).

Photo courtesy of Triton XIII (January 4–5, 2010), no. 308.

As mentioned above, royal coinage in Thrace was irregular and sporadic and did not manage to reach interregional significance as a means of payment. Only the bronze coinages of Seuthes III and Rhoemetalces I could be considered large-scale, representative issues, as in a well-developed monetary economy. Seuthes III, however, used a large number of foreign bronze coins (Macedonian) for his local needs (Dimitrov 1987; Tatscheva 2000; Nankov 2009), while Rhoemetalces I was a client-king of Augustus. Late Thracian dynastic coinage was influenced by Rome as early as 42 and increasingly so afterward; hence, it is included in the RPC I and regarded by scholars as “Roman provincial.”⁵³

Coins issued under the name of Thracian tribes complete the numismatic picture. They were short-lived coinages, primarily in base metal (silver in one case). Here the bronze issues in the names of Danteletae and Odrysae must be mentioned, as well as the ΘΠΑΚΩΝ tetradrachms. The rare issue (only 5 specimens known) of Danteletae/ΔΑΝΘΑΛΗΤΩΝ (Figure 18.6.6) (Stoyas 2012, 143–157) dates back to the 340s and most likely was commissioned to be minted at Maroneia and distributed in the upper course of the Hebros late in the reign of Philip II. The bronze coinage inscribed ΟΔΡΩΣΩΝ of type “head of Heracles with the lion’s head right / bull left standing on Heracles’ club”⁵⁴ is now convincingly dated to the period ca. 183–166, or even down to 148, minted in or around Philippopolis in the political vacuum after the withdrawal of Philip V (Koychev 2003, 19–57; Manov 2003, with earlier references).

Finally, the tetradrachms ΗΠΑΚΛΕΟΘΕΩΝ ΘΠΑΚΩΝ complement the tribal coinage of late Hellenistic Thrace. Known since the time of count Anton von Prokesch-Osten, the series was dated to the late second/early first century because of the coin type, which was copied from the late tetradrachms of Thasos (Figure 18.6.7) (Youroukova 1976; Prokopov 2006). The chronological key to its strict dating became available only in 2011, when a ΘΠΑΚΩΝ tetradrachm (16.23 g), overstruck on an Athenian New Style host coin dated to 88/7, became known (de Callatay 2012); another coin overstruck on an Athenian New Style tetradrachm dated to 81/0 has been published (MacDonald 2012). Since only 18 ΘΠΑΚΩΝ specimens are known

so far, struck from 3 obverse and 9 reverse dies, it was apparently a short-lived coinage, produced under unknown but urgent circumstances sometime after 80, postdating the First Mithridatic War. It remains unclear why this short series was marked with the ethnic legend ΘΠΑΚΩΝ.

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the theory, practice, and methodology of numismatics.

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Varbanov, Ivan. 2005–2007. *Greek Imperial Coins and Their Values*, vols. I–III. Burgas: ADICOM. An extensive corpus of all city-mints that struck provincial coins in Thrace, Moesia, and Macedonia.

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Notes

- 1 For a complete bibliography on the numismatics of ancient Thrace until 1998, see Schönert-Geiss 1999; recent overview in Theodossiev 2011, 39–40. Coinage of the Thracian kings and tribes has been continuously treated in numerous works since the middle of the eighteenth century – by Félix Cary (1752), Joseph Hilarius Eckhel, Domenico Sestini, Ennio Quirino Visconti, and other encyclopaedists and pioneers. Significant scholarly contributions were subsequently made by: Anton von Prokesch-Osten, Alfred von Sallet, Friedrich Imhoof-Blumer (1883), Ernest Muret, Behrendt Pick (1898a; 1898b), Hugo Gaebler (1906; 1935), Barclay Head (1877; 1911), Jannis Svoronos (1919), Max Strack (1912), Ernest Babelon

(1901–1932), Václav Dobruský (1897), Nikola Muchmoff (1912; 1924; 1926; 1927), and Todor Gerassimov (1942; 1958; 1975). More recently different aspects and coinages have been discussed by Edith Schönert-Geiss (1965; 1970; 1972; 1975; 1987; 1991), Olivier Picard (1990), Michael Crawford (1985), Ivan Karayotov (2007; 2009), Dimitar Draganov (1993; 2000–2001; 2011), François de Callataÿ (1991; 1997; 2012), Ilya Prokopov (2006; 2007; 2012), Kamen Dimitrov (1987; 1996; Dimitrov and Penchev 1984), Ulrike Peter (1997; 2005), David MacDonald (2009; 2012), Stavri Topalov (1994; 1998), Metodi Manov (1999; 2003), and others. One should also mention here the names of G. Katzarova, A. Rogalski, W. M. Stancomb, M. J. Price, C. C. Lorber, I. Lukanc, C. Marinescu, B. Rousseva, L. Lazarov, D. Y. Dimitrov, K. Chryssanthaki-Nagle, J. Tzvetkova, A. Koychev, V. Peshekhonov, A. Peykov, and others.

- 2 For the civic (autonomous/provincial/colonial) coinages see respectively: on Dionysopolis: Pick 1898; Odessos: Pick and Regling 1910; Topalov 1999; Karayotov 2007; Marcianopolis: Pick 1898; Nicopolis ad Istrum: Pick 1898; Mesambria: Karayotov 1994; 2009; Anchialus: Strack 1912; Apollonia Pontica: Tacchella 1898; Topalov 2007; Varbanov 2006–2007; Karayotov 2007; Bizye: Jurukova 1981; Varbanov 2006; Deultum: Draganov 2007; Apros: Draganov 2005; Cabyle: Gerassimov 1958; Draganov 1993; Augusta Traiana: Schönert-Geiss 1987; Hadrianopolis: Youroukova 1987; Philippopolis: Mouchmov 1924; Peter 2005; Varbanov 2007; Byzantium: Schönert-Geiss 1972; Perinthus: Schönert-Geiss 1965; Varbanov 2007; Sestus: RPC I; Cardia: Tzvetkova 2009; Traianopolis: Schönert-Geiss 1991; Varbanov 2007; Ainos: May 1950; Maroneia: Schönert-Geiss 1987; Psoma, Karadima, and Terzopoulou 2008; Thasos: Picard 1990; Prokopov 2006; de Callataÿ 2008; Dikaia: May 1965, Schönert-Geiss 1975; Abdera: May 1966; Chryssantaki-Nagle 2007; Topirus: Varbanov 2007; Amphipolis: Lorber 1990; Nicopolis ad Nestum: Komnick 2003; Varbanov 2005; Pautalia: Ruzicka 1933; Grigorova 1998; Varbanov 2005; Serdica: Mouchmov 1926; Varbanov 2007. Various tribal issues: Draganov 2000; Manov 1999; 2003; Koychev 2003; Stoyas 2012; Tzamalís 2012. Scythian kings: Draganov 2011. For hoards and hoarding in the Greek/Hellenistic period, see: IGCH; CH 1–10; Dimitrov 1996; Prokopov 2006; Prokopov 2012. For hoards in the Roman Republican period, see: Paunov and Prokopov 2002; Lockyear 2007. Site finds and excavation coins: Aquae Calidae: Filow 1911; Seuthopolis: Dimitrov and Penchev 1984; Cabyle: Draganov 1993; Paunov 2012; Pistiros: Taneva 2000; Maroneia: Psoma et al. 2008.
- 3 As revealed, for example, by perusing the pages of IGCH, CH 1–10, or the Bulgarian bulletin of coin finds, published regularly between 1891/1900 and 1982.

- 4 All ancient dates BCE unless otherwise noted.
- 5 IGCH 1185: Rhodes 1880 hoard.
- 6 CH 8.48: Elmalı 1984 (decadrachm) hoard, t.p.q. ca. 465–462.
- 7 IGCH 1644: Asyut hoard 1969, t.p.q. ca. 475; and IGCH 1637: Demanhur/Damanhûr.
- 8 IGCH 1478: Ras Shamra/Laodicea ad Mare 1936, t.p.q. ca. 510–500.
- 9 Hoards IGCH 355: Stip ~1875, and Prilep, before 1870, both in Macedonia; Vranje 2003, in south Serbia.
- 10 Hoards IGCH 690: Velichkovo 1937; Sadovik, before 1912 (not listed in IGCH); IGCH 692: Nevrokop area 1939.
- 11 Stater – Babelon 1901–1932, vol. 1, 71, 76–77; Head 1932, pl. 1.13.
- 12 Stater – Price 1976, no. 4.
- 13 Stater – Price 1976, no. 5.
- 14 Stater – Babelon 1901/1932, vol. 1, 77, pl. III.1.
- 15 Hekte – see Tzamalīs 2000, 32–33, no. 12, E.
- 16 Hoards IGCH 689 = CH 2.7: Sveti Vlas 1948; IGCH 734: Cozgun 1905 near Silistra in Dobrudja; IGCH 726: Orlovka 1967 in the Danube delta.
- 17 Hoards IGCH 714: Zhivkovo 1905 (40 st, 1 hekte); CH 9.21: Dabene 1979 (1 st. + AR), and Starosel 1929 (5+ st.) Plovdiv region, the latter unlisted in IGCH, as well as “Western Thrace” before 1976, 2 st. (CH 2.1).
- 18 Types SNG Cop. 455; SNG Berry 392–393; SNG BM Black Sea 164–165; Topalov 2007, 368–81, nos. 0.1–29.2.
- 19 Compare hoards IGCH 695: Krushevo 1967; IGCH 735: Pamidovo/Carsko 1962; IGCH 737 = CH 8.170: Sofia east environs 1950; IGCH 739: Dimotika/Didymotichon; IGCH 740: Sladun; IGCH 741: Kasumovo/Mominsko; IGCH 742: Gorni Domljan; IGCH 743: Vinogradec; IGCH 744: Adrianople; IGCH 747: Hvojna; IGCH 748: Gorni Voden; IGCH 749: Plovdiv; IGCH 750: Goljamo Konare; IGCH 751: Gorno Novo selo; IGCH 752: Haskovski bani; IGCH 753: Trojanovo; IGCH 754: Pyasuchevo; IGCH 755: Pyasuchevo; IGCH 757: Dâbovo; IGCH 758: Srednogorovo; IGCH 759: Maglizh; IGCH 760: Tenevo; IGCH 761: Granitovo; IGCH 762: Roza; IGCH 764: Gorno Jabulkovo; Kostenets 1906 (CH 8.109), Botevgrad (CH 8.136); Plovdiv area 1982 (CH 8.171); Obruchishte 1980, Boshulja 1980, Bratzigovo 1982, Dabene 1982 and Rozovo 1982 – all five unlisted in IGCH and CH.

- 20 Hoards IGCH 734: Cuzgun/Ioan Corvin; IGCH 740: Sladun; IGCH 742: Gorni Domljan; IGCH 751: Gorno Novo selo; IGCH 760: Tenevo; IGCH 762: Roza; IGCH 764: Gorno Jabulkovo, etc.
- 21 See hoards IGCH 740: Sladun; IGCH 756: Krumovo; IGCH 763: Karnobat area; IGCH 764: Gorno Jabâlkovo; IGCH 765: Ajtos; IGCH 766: Asparuhovo; IGCH 767: Staroselka 1955; IGCH 768: Gančevo 1951; IGCH 769: Sumen environs; IGCH 770: Kladenzi 1949; IGCH 771: Constanța; IGCH 881: Nesebâr/Mesambria; Goljam Chochoven 1965, Sliven area 1979, Debelt 1984, Vratarite 1985, and Shiloto 1996, near Burgas – not listed in IGCH and CH.
- 22 Istrus – hoards IGCH 439: Scarisoara; IGCH 700: Mahmudia; IGCH 722: Dorotskoe; IGCH 734: Cuzgun/Ioan Corvin; IGCH 809: Krajnovo; IGCH 810: Razdel 1958; IGCH 811: Bradvari [not Brama] 1964; IGCH 812: Kaolinovo 1965; IGCH 813: Constanța; IGCH 814: Daeni; IGCH 815: Tulcea; IGCH 816: Suluc near Macin; IGCH 818: Roksolany/Niconium; CH 4.28: Todorovo 1971; CH 8.602: “Bulgaria” 1991; Silistra area 1981, Luvino 1990s, Vazovo 1992, both in Razgrad region – not listed in IGCH.
- 23 Gerassimov 1975, 22–23, 31–35, figs. 15–16. Youroukova 1992, 28–30 attributed the series to the Bessi; Topalov 1998, 119–127, regarded it as an Odrysian tribal coinage.
- 24 Taneva 2000, 49, 51: no less than 11 staters, 7 in bronze, and one plated.
- 25 Hristov 2011, 28–30, no. 5.
- 26 Unpublished, see Prokopov 2007, 346 n. 16.
- 27 Hoards “Group 1” (after Picard) – IGCH 691: Venkovec 1960; IGCH 692: Nevrokop area 1939; IGCH 695: Krushevo 1967; Djigurovo 1971 (CH 3.15); Akandjiev 1975 (CH 6.7); Pontolivado 1972 (CH 8.16); Gotse Delchev 1977/8 (CH 7.25); Krustevich 2006 (Prokopov 2007, 346) and Satovcha area ~2004; “Group 2 and 3” – IGCH 701: Vaksevo 1933; IGCH 703: Pazardzik environs 1936; IGCH 711: Goljamo Belovo 1959; IGCH 712: Dupnica 1912; IGCH 713: Sofia-Ovča kupel 1941/5; IGCH 720: Skrebatno 1962; IGCH 742: Gorni Domljan; IGCH 743: Vinogradec 1963; Plovdiv 1975 (CH 6.8); Potamoi-Drama 1981 (CH 7.46); Kostenets 1906 (CH 8.109); Drama 1983 (CH 8.568); Skrebatno II 1989 and Koprilven 1998 – not in CH.
- 28 See, e.g., see the large hoard from Rezhanci (t.p.q. ca. 315): IGCH 410 and 411, and numerous single coin finds from the regions of Kyustendil, Blagoevgrad, Pernik, Sofia and Vratsa (details in series CCCHBulg).
- 29 On Paeonian royal coinage see Gaebler 1935, 199–206; Wright 2012, 1–26.

- 30 See Pavlovská 2010, 185–191.
- 31 Macedonian bronze: IGCH 733: Kitno; IGCH 778 = CH 9.104: Kosharitsa; IGCH 779: Kliment; IGCH 780: Plovdiv/Philippopolis; IGCH 781: Mogilovo; IGCH 782: Alexandrovo; IGCH 783: Ovči kladenec; IGCH 784: Izvorovo; IGCH 785: Goljamo Sivačevo; IGCH 786: IGCH 778: Brestovitsa 1968; IGCH 779: Kliment 1954; IGCH 785: Goljamo Sivačevo 1936; IGCH 786: Goljam Čočoven 1965 (mixed with AV st.); IGCH 787: Develt/Deultum; IGCH 788: Kosarica; IGCH 789: IGCH Asparuhovo 1956; IGCH 790: IGCH Černevo; IGCH 791: Varna/Odessus; IGCH 792: Jarebična 1950; IGCH 793: Vinogradec; IGCH 842: Ajtos; IGCH 844: Mogilovo 1966; IGCH 845: Turija; IGCH 861: Novo selo; Seuthopolis, before 1954 (CH 8.229); Prohore 1973 (CH 6.16); Vinograd 1975 (CH 6.17); Chernookovo (CH 6.18); Belovo (CH 6.19); Sliven area 1977 (CH 6.22); Bejanovo 1977 (CH 7.41), Shumen 1977 (CH 7.55), Preslav 1978 (CH 7.63), Salmanovo 1979 (CH 8.241 = 9.140); Varbovka 1979 (CH 8.184), Malko Tarnovo 1979 (CH 8.196); Beroe/Stara Zagora 1992 (CH 9.82); Pernik-Krakra 1972; Okopa 1981; Jambol area 1982, Gorno Trape 1995, and Jabalkovo 2004 – not listed in IGCH; a recent discussion in Psoma 2009, 12–15.
- 32 Macedonian bronzes from Seuthopolis: Philip II 136; Alexander III 76; Alexander IV 1; Cassander 119, Lysimachus 41, etc.
- 33 Unpublished, no details available.
- 34 Macedonian bronzes from Vetren/"Pistiros": Philip II 91; Alexander III 117; Cassander 2; Demetrius Poliorcetes 2; Lysimachus 36, etc. (Taneva 2000, 47–49).
- 35 Youroukova 1981, 220–221, 235–236.
- 36 Macedonian silver – IGCH 396: Gorno Čerkoviste 1923 (mixed with gold); IGCH 397: Gostilica 1958; IGCH 398: Byala 1939; IGCH 402: Bălgarene 1948; IGCH 468: Čapaev 1957; IGCH 772: Mahala 1926; IGCH 773: Southwestern Bulgaria 1939; IGCH 829: Nevrokop/Nicopolis ad Nestum 1931; IGCH 830: Momčilovici 1958; IGCH 833: Russe environs 1957; IGCH 834: Samuil 1951; IGCH 835: Malâk Porovec; IGCH 836: Tutrakan 1964; IGCH 837: Kranovo 1956; IGCH 839: Nova Zagora 1966; IGCH 849: Blagun 1955; IGCH 852: Radoslavovo 1934; IGCH 854: Malâk Porovec 1963; IGCH 855 = CH 9.143: Borovec 1929–30; IGCH 856: Pet mogili 1953; IGCH 857: Prjaporec 1926; IGCH 859: Varna I 1955; IGCH 869 = CH 8.301: Plovdiv 1907; CH 2.50: Balkans 1967; CH 8.576: Botevo; CH 8.578: Dalbok Kladenec, etc.
- 37 Macedonian gold – IGCH 395: Samovodene 1957 (66 st.); IGCH 396: Gorno Čerkoviste 1923 (80 st. mixed with AR); IGCH 399 = CH 9.105:

Topoljane, near Serres 1917 (ca. 200 st., 8 dist.); IGCH 408 = CH 9.88: Krivodol 1967 (7+ st.); IGCH 410–411: Rezhanci 1961 (3 dist. and 121+ st.); IGCH 727: Careva poljana 1937 (11 st.); IGCH 728: Sredec 1909 (3 st. mixed with AR); IGCH 775: Stambolovo 1936 (15 st.); IGCH 777: Jasna Poljana 1969 (24+ st.); IGCH 786: Goljamo Čočoven 1965 (2 st. mixed with AE); IGCH 796 = CH 9.106: Varna 1949 (ca. 1000 st.); IGCH 797: Troica 1946 (32 st.); IGCH 798: Vekilski 1943 (8 st.), IGCH 831: Mračnik 1934 (1+ st.); IGCH 853 = CH 8.257: [Malko] Topolovo 1940 (106+ st.); Rousse 1979 – 8 staters (CH 8.195); “Dobrudja,” before 1954 – several hundred st. (CH 9.107), and “Pistiros” 1999: 3 staters.

- 38 Down to 301 (perhaps even 297), Lysimachus’ monetary need for large coins was met by Cassander, his father-in-law, ally, and friend (Thompson 1968, 164; Draganov 2001, 61).
- 39 Lysimachi hoards – IGCH 849: Blagun 1955; IGCH 850: Byrsine 1938; IGCH 851: Slava Rusa near Constanța; IGCH 852: Radoslavovo 1934; IGCH 855 = CH 9.143: Borovec 1929–30; IGCH 859: Varna I 1955; IGCH 869: Plovdiv/Philippopolis 1907; [Aegean] Thrace 1980 (CH 7.60); Dragoevo, before 1920 (CH 9.145); Pobit Kamuk, Razgrad area 2001 (not in CH), etc.
- 40 Discovered during excavation in September 1999, still unpublished. See a preliminary report in Russeva 2011, and <http://web.ff.cuni.cz/ustavy/ukar/EN/proj-pistiros.html> (accessed September 17, 2014).
- 41 Such as IGCH 872 = CH 9.203: Rakitovo 1920; see also the “Black Sea” tetradrachm hoard, published in Marinescu and Lorber 2012, 197–259.
- 42 Twenty bronzes of Adaios at Maroneia, 3 Abdera, 4 Zone, 27 from Adrianople/Edirne environs (Lischine collection), 14 Seuthopolis, 20+ Cabyle, 3 Aquae Calidae, few from Apollonia/Sozopol and Ahtopol, some around Plovdiv, etc.
- 43 Unpublished and lost; see the listing in Gerassimov 1942, 284–285.
- 44 Such as Jabukovac (IGCH 447 and 458 = CH 9.174) and the “Balkan Area 1990s” hoard (CH 9.196).
- 45 Type SNG Cop. 1175–1176; SNG Stancomb 304.
- 46 Despite the huge numismatic literature published on the “eastern” Celtic coinages (Preda 1973; Pink 1974; Allen 1987; Lukanc 1996; Kostial 1997), the majority of them remain overlooked and insufficiently studied.
- 47 Paunov forthcoming a, especially chap. 5, with comments and a full list of relevant hoards.

- 48 Ptolemaic hoards CH.8.331: around Komotini, before 1988, and CH.8.535: Izgrev, near Burgas, 1979.
- 49 As mentioned in the famous Amphictionic decree of Delphi: Lefèvre 2002, no. 127. This tendency continued well into the Imperial period, a list of inscriptions in Psoma et al. 2008, 182.
- 50 See IG II² 1013 and Lefèvre 2002, no. 127, discussed in Psoma et al. 2008, 181.
- 51 As in a Thessalian inscription IG IX² 414c, lines 55 and 84.
- 52 See Prokopov 2006, 57, no. 1860; de Callataÿ 2012, 307–322, esp. 317–318.
- 53 RPC 312–314, 320–324, nos. 1702–1726.
- 54 SNG BM Black Sea, nos. 333a–b.

Part IV
Influence and Interaction

Chapter 19

The Greek Colonists

Margarit Damyanov

19.1 Introduction

Any attempt to provide a comprehensive account of Greek colonization in Thrace faces a fragmentariness that is inherent in both Thrace and the colonization itself. (In the text, “colonization” and “colonies” are used as technical terms, meaning the Greek colonization as a historical phenomenon; the Greeks called their settlements overseas *apoikiai*, but a neologism *apoikization* would not make the narrative clearer.) Most importantly, this fragmentariness is geographical, as Thrace borders three seas, and there are regions within these larger areas. The ancient geography was still more fragmentary, as Thrace was not a monolithic entity, but a collection of peoples, and colonization was not a uniform process. With a different metropolis, chronology, and local environment, every *apoikia* was an individual case. Certainly, there was a “Milesian colonization in the Black Sea,” but the conditions faced, for example, by Istros in flat Dobrudzha, open to the Scythian steppe, were distinct from those of Apollonia at the foot of wooded Strandzha. Modern geography also matters, as the ancient Thracian littoral is divided between four modern countries, with consequences for the current state and priorities of research. Under these circumstances, the result is a patchwork of local stories, which usually do not allow for the identification of a common model. A tantalizing question will always be present: does a situation glimpsed in one specific case hold true in another?

Ancient geography affects the sources. The northern Aegean was frequently involved in major events in the Greek world and therefore appears in the written tradition. The Pontic backwaters, on the other hand, remained peripheral to important events like the Persian or Peloponnesian Wars. The two exceptions – the Scythian campaign of Darius in the 510s and Pericles’ Pontic expedition in the early 430s – only strengthen this impression.¹ In the first case Herodotos (4.83–144) practically omits the western Pontic cities from the narrative; attempts to bring in additional evidence for Persian presence along the Pontic coast (Archibald 1998, 81) have been questioned (Tuplin 2010, 295). Pericles’ venture into the Black Sea is inexplicably ignored by Thucydides, and the only source, Plutarch (Per. 20), is so vague that the date and scope of the expedition (only Sinope on the southern Black Sea coast is mentioned) remain unclear. Thus, it is primarily Hellenistic inscriptions that offer snapshots of the life of Pontic Greek poleis. Our knowledge of their earlier history depends on the interpretation of

archaeological evidence, which raises again the question to what extent one can extrapolate from phenomena attested in the northern Aegean.

Geography again predetermines other major differences between the Aegean and the Black Sea. The former is a physical part of the Greek world, with islands to facilitate navigation and a climate that did not present additional obstacles to the colonists. There are traces of earlier (Mycenaean, in some cases) maritime contacts in the northern Aegean that preceded the colonization. Toponyms in the northeastern Aegean and the Hellespont appear in Homer, but in a non-Greek context – an intriguing fact, despite the lack of archaeology to flesh out Homeric geography. At present, there is no unequivocal evidence of such “precolonial” phenomena in Pontos.

As other chapters in this *Companion* consider Greek influences in ancient Thrace, the present contribution exclusively focuses on relations between the apoikiai and their native surroundings, within the traditional geographical limits of the lower Strymon and the Danube;² emphasis will fall on the early history of the region, before the Macedonian conquest, except for the Black Sea, where Hellenistic inscriptions provide valuable information about colonial realities.

19.2 Preliminary Considerations

Chronology

The colonization of all Thracian coasts began almost simultaneously before and around the middle of the seventh century, slightly earlier in the Aegean and the Propontis.³ Thasos, founded by Parians in the 670s, seems to be the earliest, with a second wave of settlers slightly later. Chians founded Maroneia probably before the middle of the century. Klazomenian Abdera belongs to the same group with a date around 650; it was refounded by Teians a century later. In the mid-seventh century, Andrians settled the western end of the region, establishing Argilos on the lower Strymon. The colonization of Samothrace may be dated to the early sixth century. Already by the third quarter of the seventh century, Thasos had proceeded to found settlements on the Thracian coast, and by the middle of the next century the Thasian peraia (“the land across,” on the mainland) comprised the coast between the Strymon and Nestos. In the later sixth century, Samothrace created its peraia to the east of Mt. Ismaros.

Ainos at the mouth of the Hebros River is related to the Aeolian colonies on the Thracian Chersonese, as it was founded by Alopekonnese (itself of uncertain date). Archaeology indicates a foundation before the end of the seventh century, with respective consequences for the chronology of the Chersonese, where seventh-century dates are suggested for the main Aeolian colonies of Sestos, Madytos, and Alopekonnese (and Elaious?). Milesian

Limnai and Milesian-Klazomenian Kardia also belong to the early group. More settlements appeared with the arrival of Miltiades in the mid-sixth century.

Megara was the leading metropolis in the Propontis, where it founded three cities in the second quarter of the seventh century – Kalchedon, Selymbria, and Byzantion (in that order). At the very end of the century, Samos founded Perinthos (and minor settlements) on the Thracian shore of Propontis.

The Milesian colonization of the Black Sea began with Istros in Dobrudzha, with a traditional foundation date of 657/6. The earliest finds, however, are dated to the mid-seventh century and come from a site to the north, identified as Orgame. Apollonia was founded around 610; although it is the first safe harbor after the Bosporos, Istros, 300 km to the north, was settled earlier (followed by Borysthenes further north, with a date in 646/5) – a curious aspect of Pontic colonization. Miletos again founded Odessos, ca. 575, and Tomis emerged in the same period, also of Milesian origin, but without foundation date and with unclear early history. Dorians later joined in, with Mesambria, located across the Bay of Burgas from Apollonia, founded by Megara and Kalchedon in the late sixth century. The date of Kallatis, a colony of Herakleia Pontica, is controversial: written sources may point to the later sixth century, but there is nothing from before 400 on the site. Dionysopolis, northeast of Odessos, is an obscure case: no metropolis or foundation date is provided by the sources, and the earliest indications of a functioning polis date from the second half of the fourth century.

Motives

There is no simple solution: various reasons, both internal and external, prompted Greeks to settle overseas. A metropolis might face external pressure, as in the case of Teian Abdera and most probably the Milesian colonies in the Black Sea (Tsatskheladze 2006). Thracian shores had things to offer, including land, which was likely especially attractive to Miletos, which had lost territory to Lydia in the seventh and sixth centuries. Such circumstances could explain the strange sequence of Milesian colonization, with the earliest foundation at Istros in the flatlands of Dobrudzha. Despite certain doubts (Treister 1996, 169–170; Tsatskheladze 2006, xxix), metals seemed to matter, as, for example, in the cases of Thasos, famous for the mines on the island and on the Thracian mainland, and Apollonia, where traces of metallurgy date from the very beginning of the city. Land, metals, and other resources could account for various strategies (Doonan 2006, 53–55); gaining access to them brought Greeks into contact with natives and created a variety of colonial stories that will be discussed below.

19.3 The Northern Aegean

The northern Aegean is by far the richer of the two regions, both in evidence and in variety of local developments. The Greeks came to inhabited shores and the sources clearly attest the presence of Thracians, as: residents of Thasos and Samothrace before the arrival of the Greeks; and adversaries of Klazomenians and Teians in Abdera, and of Athenians in the lower Strymon valley. These Thracians were not a homogeneous population: for the early fifth century, Herodotos (7.108–111) locates Paitoi, Kikones, Bistones, Sapaioi, Dersaioi, Edonians, and Satrai between the Hebros and Strymon; Apsinthians lived to the east of the Hebros, and Dolonkoi inhabited the Chersonese (6.36–37). Archilochos (fr. 5 West) mentions Saioi already in the mid-seventh century, while Thracians of the Hellespont, the Kikones, and the Paeonians were regarded as Troy's allies in the *Iliad* (2.844–850). The Kikones reappear in the *Odyssey* (9.39–59, 196–206), with their city Ismaros and Maron, priest of Apollo. Much later texts identify Ismaros with Maroneia, and Strabo (7, fr. 43) lists both Ismaros and Maroneia as Kikonian poleis.

The case of Ismaros/Maroneia illustrates the problematic continuity between Homer and the colonization. Near the Late Classical site of Maroneia (from the mid-fourth century on, but with no earlier material), there is another fortified hill, Agios Georgios, with walls that are termed “precolonial” and “Cyclopean”; finds of Early Iron Age pottery prompted its identification as Kykonian Ismaros, but it was also suggested as the possible site of early Maroneia (Baralis 2010, 256). The lack of written and archaeological evidence allows for a variety of scenarios: from violent capture of the Kykonian city to a peaceful settlement and cohabitation of Chians and Thracians, fostered by the famous Ismarian wine (Tiverios 2008, 101). It remains unclear whether the events in the *Odyssey* belong to the Bronze Age or echo later Greek ventures, possibly as late as the colonization. To add to the confusion, another localization of early Maroneia has been proposed recently (Loukopoulou and Psoma 2008, 69–76).

Archaeology offers additional evidence of early seafaring in the region, which reveals movement of goods (and therefore of people) in the later eighth and early seventh century, shortly before the arrival of the colonists. There are several northern Aegean ceramic groups that traveled by sea, including “Olynthian” pottery, Subgeometric amphorae, and G 2–3 ware that are discovered at several sites later settled by Greeks: Samothrace, Thasos, Neapolis, and Eion (Bernard 1964; Gimatzidis 2002; Ilieva 2009).

This coastal dynamic is reflected in the Thracian interior; the best example is the site at Koprivlen, in a valley on the middle Nestos, where pottery with painted geometric decoration predominates in the late eighth and early seventh century, which indicates possible local manufacture (Bozkova and Delev 2011) and hints at the precolonial penetration into Thrace of not only imports, but also people. Somewhat unexpectedly, such findings could tell us something about the Phoenicians, who appear in the literary sources,

including Herodotos' mention of Phoenician mines on Thasos and the Phoenician roots of the sanctuary of Heracles (2.44, 6.47). A. J. Graham (1978, 88–92, 96–97) suggested that the withdrawal of the Phoenicians gave way to the Greeks; alternatively, they could be the carriers of “precolonial” imports. The absence of Phoenician material in the northern Aegean speaks against this (Baralis 2010, 253–254; Muller 2010, 218–219), however, and Koprivlen, with the presumed local manufacture of “imported” and “precolonial” pottery, indicates that people other than Phoenicians were moving in the region. It is hard to say who they were (and to ascribe ethnicity to them – Aeolian Greeks, Pelasgians, others?), but this seems to be a regional, north Aegean phenomenon, unrelated to later colonial foundations. In any case, seafaring, exchange of goods, and information about the region's riches could have prepared the ground for later colonial activity.

Within the northern Aegean, case studies can illustrate the variety of contacts between Greeks and Thracians. Thasos, facing the Thracian coast and the earliest colony, is a natural choice. Two waves of colonists are suggested, ca. 680 and ca. 650 (the poet Archilochos arriving in the second group), and archaeology seems to confirm this chronology (Muller 2010, 219–220). The site was inhabited before the colonization, but the transition remains unclear: evidence, thought to indicate destruction of the Thracian settlement by fire (Bernard 1964, 142–145; Graham 1978, 97), has been reinterpreted as traces of early metallurgy (Muller 2010, 216, 222). Despite healthy skepticism (Owen 2003, 10–12), Archilochos seems to refer to conflicts with the natives – on the mainland, but possibly also on Thasos itself (Graham 1978, 85, 94); a new reading of the *Monumentum Archilochi*, a first-century inscription from Paros that contains an account of the poet's life with excerpts from his works, suggests that the Parians evicted the Thracians from the island (Tsantsanoglou 2003, *passim*). Shortly after the mid-seventh century, a secondary colonization of the Thasian *peraiia* began, with settlement at Neapolis, Oisyme (Tiverios 2008, 80), and possibly Eion (Isaac 1986, 5–7; Tiverios 2008, 67–68; Bonias 2000, 241). All three sites reveal a precolonial layer similar to that under Thasos, and one could imagine Greeks driving away the Thracians. Certainly, this was not the only mechanism: a peaceful settlement and cohabitation with the local population has been suggested for Argilos on the lower Strymon (Perreault and Bonias 2010, 227–231).

The swift, large-scale, and possibly violent colonization of Thasos raises questions about an elusive aspect of the process, namely its demography: how many colonists were involved in these ventures? Substantial numbers would be needed to claim large territories, especially in a conflict situation. A “thousand men” is mentioned in the *Monumentum Archilochi*, presumably Archilochos' second wave (Pouilloux 1954, 26–27; Graham 1978, 93); such a force, probably exaggerated and in any case exceptional in this period of early colonization, could explain the rapid expansion. No evidence supports the

second part of the hypothesis, though, that the colonists took Thracian wives to make Thasos a “mixed city” (Pouilloux 1954, 27); different explanations can be offered for the scarcity of Thracian names in later Thasian prosopography that hint at more peaceful interactions between Greeks and natives (Graham 1978, 92–93). The wealth of Archaic Thasos came mostly from gold and silver mines (Hdt. 6.46–47) that, together with the *emporía* (“trading posts”) on the mainland, became the reason for conflict with Athens (Thuc. 1.100) in 465–463.

This context warrants a short excursus on the lower Strymon region, which provides a telling illustration of the variety of Graeco-Thracian relations (Isaac 1986, 1–51). Simultaneously with the siege of Thasos, Athens sent 10,000 settlers to Ennea Hodoi (near the future Amphipolis), who were destroyed by Thracian Edonians in a battle for gold mines (Thuc. 1.100, 4.102; Hdt. 9.75). Although Athenian activity had little to do with Archaic colonization, it has become a self-evident example of Thracian hostility. One may counter, however, with evidence about one native settlement in the region – Edonian Myrkinos. In the late sixth century, Histiaios of Miletos settled there and found numerous Greeks (including Thasians?) and non-Greeks willing to follow him. Later, his nephew Aristagoras also went to Myrkinos, but waged war against some Thracians and perished (Hdt. 5.23, 125). The presence of Greeks in the later sixth century is confirmed by graffiti with Greek and Thracian names found at a site on Hill 133 (Ennea Hodoi?), near Amphipolis; still more intriguing is a funerary inscription, in which Parians honored a certain Tokes (a Thracian name) who had fallen for his “beloved Eion” (Isaac 1986, 4–5; Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2002, 38–41). In the later fifth century (after the foundation of Amphipolis in 437), Pittakos, a king, resided in Myrkinos and Edonians were actively involved in Greek struggles in the region (Thuc. 4.107, 5.6). It is a fascinating picture of cohabitation, with no constant antagonism; conflicts probably arose only as a result of attempts to upset the balance.

Abdera, to the east of Thasian *peraiá*, seems to offer a more clear-cut case of an *apoikia* on the mainland that was unable to obtain the insular isolation of Thasos. If we are to believe the sources, Abdera’s history began with the classical opposition between colonists and natives. Klazomenians founded the city in the mid-seventh century, only to be chased away by Thracians. A century later Abdera was refounded by Teians, but not as a “regular” colonial venture; facing Persian rule, the whole population of Teos fled to Thrace (Hdt. 1.168). It was possibly superior numbers that secured the Teian success, as Pindar’s Second Paean hints at another difficult beginning (Graham 1992, 49–50): the colonists conquered fertile land by war, defeated the Paeonians, and later prevailed again in battle. Some of the events in the Paean should be dated between the Teian foundation in 545/4 and the Persian conquest in the late sixth century, but there could have been later clashes, shortly before the

pean's composition in the 460s (Dougherty 1994, 212–213). We next learn that the Odrysian king Sitalkes was married to an Abderan woman, sister of Nymphodoros (who was close to the king) (Thuc. 2.29) – an example of the relations between Thracian and Greek elites. Although the idea that Abdera was a tributary dependent of the Odrysians has been rejected (Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007, 112–115), one can presume that it had stable relations with its Thracian hinterland, at least until the early fourth century, when a Triballian raid in 376/5 inflicted substantial damages to the city's territory (Diod. 15.36; Aen. Tact. 15.8–10), followed by the absence of Abdera from the fragmentary Pistiros inscription (where neighboring Maroneia is prominent).

Archaeological and other evidence completes and modifies this brief overview. Excavations have brought to light both the early city and the Klazomenian necropolis. Surprisingly, the results fail to confirm the impermanence of the first colony; the necropolis spans the second half of the seventh century into the early sixth and allows only a small gap before the arrival of the Teians (Skarlatidou 2004, 249–257). The late seventh-century fortifications, the earliest so far attested in the northern Aegean (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2004, 237–246), seem to fit well in a conflict situation; Teians constructed another wall, emphasizing the need to protect the city. The absence of villages and farms in Abdera's territory before the fourth century (Kallintzi 2004, 281–284; Baralis 2010, 257–261) strengthens this impression and indicates a limited use of the territory, possibly due to chronic insecurity. Coinage offers another perspective. About 520, a generation after the Teian refoundation, Abdera started minting large quantities of heavy silver coins (Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007, 88–90). The city did not have its own sources of metal and one is left to presume that trade with locals remained stable into the following century. It would seem that there was more than just conflict, even in the emblematic case of Abdera. The sources could be selective and, moreover, Abdera's hinterland was not monolithic: some Thracians were enemies, but other could be partners.

To summarize, the reality of the Greek colonies between the Strymon and Mt. Ismaros appears to be somewhere between conflict and coexistence. It would be difficult to ignore testimonies of hostilities, but there is also cohabitation. Demography mattered, as revealed in the cases of ill-fated Klazomenian Abdera, the successful Teian refoundation of that settlement, or the Thasian expansion (but one should remember the Athenian failure at Drabeskos).

Samothrace is a case apart. The sources (reviewed in Graham 2002, 232–237, 249) speak of Samians settling with the natives, variously identified as Thracians (on the archaeological evidence, see Matsas 2007, 388–396), Pelasgians, or Trojans; Pseudo-Skymnos describes the colonists as “cohabitating” (*synoikoi*) with the natives. Placing the G 2–3 ware from the Sanctuary of the Great Gods in a non-Greek context (Ilieva 2007, 214–216; 2008, 110) supports the later Samian colonization (against the earlier

Aeolian), but it also speaks of continuity between the pre-Greek and the Greek period, probably reflected in graffiti that attest the use of a non-Greek language, which gradually faded away between the sixth and fourth centuries (Lehmann 1960, 8–13; Graham 2002, 250–254). Like Thasos, Samothrace created a *peraia* on the mainland, where it founded, according to the variety of terms used in the sources, *emporia*, *teiche* (“forts”), or *poleis* (“cities”). One of them, Zone, seems to replicate its metropolis, with numerous non-Greek (and some Greek) graffiti (mostly sixth-century) in the sanctuary of Apollo and Thracian pottery in fifth- and fourth-century layers (Ilieva 2007, 218–219 n. 22; Matsas 2007, 290 n. 18). Discussing Samothrace, it is tempting to imagine a scenario of peaceful Greek settlement and symbiosis with the native population that led (inevitably?) to the latter’s gradual Hellenization, but this would be “an imaginative, maximalist, reconstruction” (Graham 2002, 255). The question remains: is Samothrace a special case, or, because of the sanctuary’s specific context, is evidence preserved here that was lost elsewhere?

To the east of the Hebros, the Thracian Chersonese and Propontis are poorly known in terms of archaeology, but written sources offer curious glimpses of the colonial reality. Again, we enter Homer’s world, where the Thracians of Ainos and the Hellespont are Troy’s allies, and Sestos is a non-Greek city. Ainos is said to have had an earlier name – Poltiobria (from *Poltis* and *bria*, Thracian for “city”) (Str. 7.6.1). Precolonial materials were discovered there, and pottery marks the arrival of Greeks in the second half of the seventh century (Başaran 2007, 73; Tiverios 2008, 119), which is important for the chronology of the region.

Ainos was in the land of the Apsinthians, who appear in the most unusual account of a Greek colonial undertaking in Thrace (Hdt. 6.34–40). In the mid-sixth century, they threatened the Dolonkoi of the Chersonese (by that time, there were several colonies there) with war; the latter were advised by the Pythia to bring back an *oikistes* (“founder,” “leader of settlers”). This was Miltiades the Elder, a member of the Philaid clan in Athens, who gathered fellow Athenians and sailed for the Chersonese, where the Dolonkoi made him a tyrant. Miltiades barred the isthmus with a wall and founded (or refounded) several cities (Ps.-Skymn. 701–702, 711–712). With the support of the Dolonkoi, the Philaids remained in power until the early fifth century, the last of them, Miltiades the Younger, married the daughter of a Thracian king. Certainly, Herodotos is not telling everything, and we lack the archaeological picture, but it would be difficult to overestimate the uniqueness of this situation, in which Thracians seek the advice of a Greek oracle and willingly bring in colonists.

On the other hand, in the fifth and fourth centuries there was lasting conflict between the Greeks and the neighboring Thracians (the Apsinthians?); the isthmus wall was restored in 447 and again in 398 as a measure against

Thracians from the north who were ravaging the fertile lands of the Chersonesitans (Xen., *Hell.* 3.2.8–10; all sources in Isaac 1986, 167–186). The poleis on the coast of the Propontis, with a densely inhabited hinterland (Xen., *Anab.* 7.2–5), created fortified settlements to protect their territories, probably for the same reasons (Loukopoulou 1989, 185–189); this was a major problem elsewhere as well, as revealed, for example, by Polybius' (4.38, 45) famous later description of the same situation for Byzantion or the Hellenistic inscriptions from Istros in Dobrudzha that document the struggles of that city (see below).

This chronic pressure was different from the Odrysian expansion in the region that started in the fifth century (Hdt. 7.137; Thuc. 2.67; Xen., *Anab.* 7.2.22, 32) and reached its climax with the campaigns of Kotys I and the tributary dependence of the Greek cities. “The war for the Chersonese” goes beyond the limits of this text, but it is intriguing to see (Greek) coastal settlements in Thracian hands. Around 400, the dynast Seuthes controlled several settlements, including Bisanthe (Xen., *Anab.* 7.2.38), originally a Samian apoikia (or secondary colony of Perinthos) (Loukopoulou 1989, 56). We do not know the mechanisms of this control, but in Xenophon's account, Seuthes resided some 10 km from Perinthos and sold booty taken from the Thracians in the city's market (*Anab.* 7.2.17, 4.1). The example may be instructive about other parts of the Thracian littoral.

19.4 The Black Sea

Parallels between the colonial situations in the northern Aegean and the Black Sea must be drawn with caution. Unlike the northern Aegean, there are very few written sources about the Black Sea and most conclusions are based on archaeology. Natural and other circumstances differed, as exemplified by a variety of developments within the framework of the Milesian colonization: the cases of Istros, Apollonia, and Odessos will be discussed.

An important difference with the Aegean is that, at present, there is no unequivocal evidence of a “precolonial” phase of maritime contacts that preceded the colonial foundations. Curiously, evidence from Mesambria alone, among the latest foundations, could begin such a discussion. Pseudo-Skymnos (737–742) and Herodotos (6.33) probably refer to two successive groups of settlers, respectively in the late sixth century and again in the early fifth. Strabo (7.6.1) mentions an earlier name, however, Menebria, from Menas and bria (like Poltiobria above), and the same tradition is attested by a later epitaph (IGBulg 1², 345). Finds of Early Iron Age pottery (Venedikov 1980) seemingly confirmed the native origin of Mesambria and created the image of Mesambria as a major Thracian port, transformed by the colonists into a Greek polis (discussion in Gyuzelev 2008, 78–84) – a unique scenario. A hiatus before the arrival of the Greeks is indicated, however, by the absence

of imports before the late sixth century, leading one to wonder how Thracian Mesambria could have been excluded from the maritime traffic that began with the first Milesian foundations in the mid-seventh century. Since imports are known to have reached native sites in the region already in the early sixth century (see below), it would be easier to consider mythical Menas (or Melsas) a Hellenistic invention (Nawotka 1994, 326).

The actual colonization started from Dobrudzha, with the foundation of Istros (and Orgame), some 400 km to the north of the Bosporus. Apollonia, the first safe harbor after the straits, appeared only a few decades later; Milesian colonists skipped several suitable sites (to be settled later, like Apollonia). In the possible context of Miletos losing land to Lydia, these settlers were attracted apparently by the steppe flatlands and large rivers, which offered agricultural potential and other sources of food, like fish. One additional factor may have contributed to this choice: the near total absence of a native population. The early seventh century was a time of change and the local Babadag Culture collapsed (Avram 2007, 487–489), possibly as a result of general upheaval in the Pontic steppes. It would have been easier to found a colony in an (almost) empty landscape, although Orgame is situated on a naturally fortified promontory. It may even be the case that Orgame was the first Greek settlement, with the leading role later transferred to Istros, as at Borysthenes/Berezan and Olbia to the north (Alexandrescu 1999, 22–24).

Another development that relates the colonization of Dobrudzha less to Thrace and more to the northern Black Sea, is the early emergence of the colonial *chora* (“agricultural territory”). Already in the sixth century, a road network, implying a broader territorial organization, could be discerned in the Istrian necropolis and beyond (Alexandrescu 1978, fig. 3). From ca. 600 on, approximately a dozen settlements appeared around Istros, possibly reflecting the presence of additional settlers who took possession of the land (Avram 2007, 492–493); a rural necropolis indicates permanent habitation (Teleaga and Zirra 2003). If one equates (with all due reservations) sherds with people, the inhabitants were mostly, but not only, Greek, with 10–15 percent native pottery of both Thracian and north Pontic origin (Avram 2007, 490, 492). It would seem that the arrival of the Greeks created a “zone of stability” that attracted natives who could be incorporated into the economy of the polis: the proportion of non-Greek pottery in the city itself increased in the later Archaic levels, possibly indicating the gradual infiltration of natives (Dimitriu 1966, 40–41, 54–56). Outside the immediate surroundings of Istros, imports make local communities more visible only after the mid-sixth century (Teleaga 2008, *passim*).

The development of Istros is marked by the mid-sixth-century appearance of stone temples in the *temenos* (“sacred precinct”), followed in the late sixth century by the earliest fortifications in the west Pontic region (Avram 2003, 319–323). The latter may reveal some aspects of the colonial dynamics, for

the city was sacked ca. 500, possibly by Scythians in the aftermath of Darius' campaign (Avram 2003, 305–306). Several sixth-century tumuli in the necropolis (Alexandrescu 1966, nos. XII, XVII, XIX) raise more questions. The mounds cover primary cremations, as is usual in Istros, but the associated human and animal remains had previously been interpreted as sacrifices more appropriate for “barbarians,” which created in turn the impression of an ethnically mixed necropolis (Alexandrescu 1966, 273–277). Later, P. Alexandrescu abandoned this view and suggested that the tumuli belonged to Greeks emulating Homeric burials (Alexandrescu 1994, 15–32), in which case they might tell us something else about Archaic Istros.

By contrast Odessos, to the south of the steppe region, was founded in an inhabited landscape, as indicated by Thracian cemeteries that appeared in the late seventh century (Archibald 1998, 58–63); in the Hellenistic period Krobyzai “lived in a circle” around the city (Ps.-Skymn. 750). But there is almost no diffusion of Archaic imports in the hinterland to indicate interaction with natives. Their occurrence in the fifth century could be better explained as a result of penetration from the south associated with Odrysian expansion; Odessos' role in the process becomes visible only in the Hellenistic period, when Macedonian activity in the region considerably changed the setting. Not that Odessos was isolated from its environment, but it could have emerged as a minor apoikia, a port on the route between Apollonia and Istros (Damyanov 2010, 274).

Founded later than Istros (ca. 610), Apollonia was situated on the coastal island of St. Kirik and a peninsula that provided safe harbor and natural protection. There is no evidence that the colonists needed it, although they did find an inhabited hinterland. Coastal Strandzha was part of the Early Iron Age “megalthic” culture, as attested by dolmens (Gyuzelev 2008, 106, 111, 115). On the heights of Meden Rid (“Copper Ridge”), which encloses the coastal plain around Apollonia, Thracian “hill-forts” were identified and investigations at Malkoto Kale have revealed continuity from the ninth century to after the arrival of the Greeks (Shalganova and Gotsev 1995, 328; Archibald 1998, 34–36). These natives could be the Skyrmidiadai mentioned by Herodotus (4.93).

Archaeology provides evidence that the colonists quickly established relations with the Thracians. Throughout the city, traces of bronze metallurgy have been discovered, and on St. Kirik they are securely dated to the colony's earliest times; the metal came from Meden Rid, where sixth-century materials were found associated with ancient mines. It is difficult to imagine that mining in the foothills of Strandzha would be possible without the consent of the natives, and Thracian pottery in the early layers of the city adds to the picture. This evidence for precocious metallurgy may reveal something about the reasons for the colonization. The interactions were not limited to Apollonia's immediate surroundings, for the Thracian interior was most accessible by

navigable lagoons at the head of the Bay of Burgas, where Greek imports appeared very early in the sixth century, before penetrating further inland (Tzochev 2011, 73–86).

The Classical period offers more evidence. The Odrysians were on the rise in the fifth century and we know that Sitalkes controlled the tribes up to the Black Sea (Thuc. 2.96.1); thus, the Pontic poleis may have paid tribute (Thuc. 2.97.3) and possibly profited from the new stability as well. Apollonia prospered, as evidenced by the erection of a bronze colossus of Apollo (Plin., HN 34.18): apparently, copper was still mined in the first half of the fifth century.

Around the middle of the century, a more detailed picture of Apollonia's surroundings emerges. A large, new necropolis was created along the coast, with family plots along a road (Hermayr 2010, 39–46), and gives a strong impression of a communal undertaking. These changes could be explained by Apollonia's internal development: Aristotle (Pol. 5.3.1303a, 5.6.1306a) mentions *epoikoi* ("additional settlers") and strife, and a change in government. A surge in the population could explain the necropolis and have led to land redistribution. It is perhaps not accidental that structures (farms or hamlets?) appeared for the first time on the hills around the city at this time.⁴ Such evidence indicates that Apollonia felt safe in its environment and presupposes good relations with the natives. The fifth- to fourth-century necropolis reveals nothing in that direction, however: none of some 2000 excavated graves could be definitely ascribed with non-Greek ethnicity, although a few presumably Thracian names appear on monuments (IGBulg 1², 426, 430, 438, 440, 441). Such findings do not mean that there were no Thracians in Apollonia, only that they remain archaeologically invisible.

Beyond Apollonia's territory, the commercial corridor through the Bay of Burgas was still functioning, as indicated by the Sladkite Kladentsi ("Freshwater Sources") site, strategically placed on a sandbar between two lagoons (Gyuzelev 2008, 98–99, 187–192). The presence of numerous fifth- and fourth-century imports have led to its identification as an emporion of Apollonia (Isaac 1986, 249), but a necropolis with cremations in urns seems to be native. Another site nearby displays a wealth of fourth-century Greek goods (Balabanov 2011, 117–127), and the "economic zone" of Apollonia could be traced again, following the Archaic imports, to the region of Karnobat (Tzochev 2010, pl. 56, 2).

No written sources elucidate these interactions and it is only Hellenistic inscriptions that offer details about, for example, a "king Kotys", who sent his son to Apollonia "as a guarantee" (IGBulg 1², 389), or another Kotys, who had property (?) near the city (IGBulg 1², 469bis; Gyuzelev 2008, 137–138); in the latter, "the grave of Mostis," possibly an earlier dynast, is mentioned as a landmark. Coexistence emerges, already suggested for earlier periods. The third-century Mesambrian decree of Sadala (IGBulg 1², 307) is the clearest

testimony for such relations, as it contains a treaty between the polis and this Thracian dynast, probably about ships that were wrecked in his dominion. The decree had to be placed next to the stelae of Sadala's ancestors: four are named, whose rule may extend into the fourth century. Elsewhere, inscriptions reveal a more hostile environment. Several third- and second-century decrees from Istros illustrate that polis's struggle for survival. The decree of Agathokles (ISM I, 15; Pippidi 1975, 31–55) pictures the chora as “unprotected” and “at war,” ravaged by the Thracians just when “the crops were ripe.” The inscription hints at the mechanisms of coexistence – the Thracians broke “the oaths and the treaties.” Another decree (ISM I, 8; Pippidi 1961, 53–66) offers details about an embassy sent to secure the release of hostages and to convince another Thracian dynast to “restore the revenues to the citizens.”

While it would be irresponsible to retroject into an earlier period the information garnered from such snapshots or to assume similar scenarios in different regions, there are precious nuances to be apprehended. In order to protect the territory of Istros, Agathokles recruited not only citizens, but also “barbarians” who had taken refuge in the city. Were they living in the Istrian chora? Most probably. Greeks living side by side with Thracians serves as an appropriate conclusion for this chapter, to which one could add an obscure piece of evidence about a poorly known apoikia. According to Pseudo-Skymnos (756–757), near Dionysopolis, in the borderland between the Krobyzai and Scythians, there lived *migades Hellenes oiketai*. Devoid of further context, philological arguments point to an ethnic “mixture” (Damyanov 2003, 258–260). We can only speculate about the exact mechanism, but it is hardly surprising that, after centuries of coexistence, Greeks were no longer “colonists” in this region, but had become just another native community.

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Isaac, Benjamin. 1986. *The Greek Settlements in Thrace Before the Macedonian Conquest*. Leiden: Brill. Indispensable, although outdated in some parts. At present, the only study that discusses the entire Thracian littoral (regrettably, without the islands of Thasos and Samothrace).

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Notes

- 1 All dates in the text are BCE.
- 2 Following Isaac 1986, for example. There is a chapter about Thrace from the Axios to the Strymon in Hansen and Nielsen 2004, but, as the author admits, it is an artificial construction. Besides, there are very early developments in the Chalkidike, in terms of Greek presence, that set the region apart from the rest of the Thracian coasts (Tiverios 2008, 33ff.).
- 3 The chronology of the colonization is more or less established and there is no need to review it here. Hansen and Nielsen 2004 provide dates with discussion.
- 4 Results of Bulgarian-French investigations in 2010–2011.

Chapter 20

Athens

Matthew A. Sears

20.1 Introduction

Athens demonstrated a keen interest in Aegean Thrace for over two centuries, from the time of Peisistratos in the mid sixth century BCE until the rise of Philip of Macedon in the mid fourth. This interest centered primarily on two regions: the Thracian Chersonese, today's Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey guarding the entrance to the Hellespont; and the lower Strymon River valley just east of modern Thessaloniki. Both regions were strategically important, the former providing land for Athenian settlers and affording control of Black Sea trade, and the latter ensuring ready supplies of the timber and precious metals that were essential for a naval empire. Beyond furnishing material and political advantages, Thrace fascinated the Athenians and had a profound impact on the Athenian imagination. By turns terrifying and alluring, Thrace and the Thracians loom large in Attic literature and art. Traditionally, scholars have focused on the process of "Hellenization" on the part of those Thracians who came into contact with Athenians and other Greeks (see Danov 1976; Baba 1990). Atheno-Thracian interaction, however, was much more complex than any one-way process of assimilation or acculturation. Thrace itself – much like Persia – had a clear influence on the Athenians in terms of politics, society, and culture.

Before examining Athenian relations with Thrace, we must first establish what the Athenians considered Thrace to be. In other words, what would an Athenian conceive of as the geographical extent of Thrace, and what peoples would be counted as Thracians? Several chapters in this volume address these issues with greater depth and scope, so a few words will suffice here. The Athenians, as with most other Greeks, were in the main interested only in those parts of Thrace lying near the sea, particularly along the northern coast of the Aegean, and the eastern and southern coasts of the Black Sea. While they were aware of and sometimes had contact with Thracians from regions further inland, Athenians rarely ventured far from the coast. Some areas which we today do not normally consider to be a part of Thrace were frequently considered so in antiquity. This discrepancy applies especially to northwestern Anatolia, including the area immediately to the south of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) in what was known as the Troad, and the southern coast of the Black Sea. The Gallipoli Peninsula was home to several tribes considered to be Thracians, whose interaction with settlements lying just across the Hellespont, including Lampsakos, was pronounced enough that

we can safely include the northern Troad within a Thracian context. South of the Black Sea lived the Bithynians, whom several ancient Greek sources identify as “Bithynian Thracians” or simply the “Thracians in Asia” (Hdt. 7.75; Xen., *Hell.* 1.3.2). The western border of Thrace with Macedonia is difficult to define. In the Archaic period it seems that Thracians dwelt even to the west of the Axios River, along the Thermaic Gulf, but the Macedonians gained control of this region by the fifth century.

20.2 Historical Outline

The Athenians were not major players in the great colonization movements of the Archaic period, but in the late seventh century they did send out an expedition to the city of Sigeion in the Troad. Under the leadership of Phrynon, an Olympic victor in the pankration (no-holds-barred wrestling), the Athenians gained control of the city, securing a base along the southern shore of the Hellespont. Mytilene, the principal city of Lesbos lying just off the coast of the Troad, had also seen the value in such a site, and it was from the Mytileneans that Phrynon wrested power over Sigeion. During the subsequent and long-lasting struggle between the Athenians and Mytileneans, Phrynon was killed in single combat by Pittakos, the renowned leader of Mytilene and one of the seven wise men of Greece (Plut., *Mor.* 858a–b; Diod. 9.12.1; Diog. Laert. 1.74–81). Evincing the Thracian context of this region, the name Pittakos – shared by a king of the Edonians in the fifth century (Thuc. 4.107) – is distinctly Thracian, and Diogenes Laertius tells us that Pittakos’ father was Thracian (1.74). The Athenians, rebuffed for now, eventually returned to the region, only this time they focused much of their attention on the northern shore of the Hellespont, the Thracian Chersonese.

Around 550, while Peisistratos was tyrant at Athens, another Athenian expedition set out for Thrace, this time to the Chersonese under the leadership of Miltiades the Elder, head of the influential Philaid family. Miltiades had been invited to the region by members of a Thracian tribe, the Dolonkoi, in order to provide them protection against their Thracian rivals, the Apsinthioi (Hdt. 6.34–35). Scholars are divided as to whether Miltiades went to Thrace on his own initiative or was an agent of a larger policy of the Peisistratids to control the Hellespont (Scott 2005, 163–170). Herodotus, perhaps relying too much on a pro-Philaid source, says that Miltiades was dissatisfied with the present political situation in Athens – namely the government of one man – and decided to seek opportunity elsewhere. Shut out of government at Athens, Miltiades was promptly made a tyrant in his own right by the native Thracian inhabitants in the Chersonese, where he ruled until his death over two decades later, about 525. He was succeeded by his elder nephew, Stesagoras, who was in turn succeeded around 516 by his younger brother, Miltiades, who would achieve great fame as the victor of Marathon. Indicative that the Peisistratids eventually did see the merit in having a foothold on the Hellespont, the

younger Miltiades had been sent out by Hippias on an official mission to take over as ruler of the Chersonese (Hdt. 6.38–39).

Even before the expedition of the elder Miltiades, Peisistratos might have owed his position as tyrant to the Thracians. As is well known, Peisistratos made three attempts at becoming tyrant, with only the third securing lasting rule. On this third attempt, he won a military engagement at Pallene in Attica backed by allied strongmen. Prior to the battle, Peisistratos had spent several years in Thrace, principally in the north Aegean across from the island of Thasos. There, in the vicinity of the valuable mines of Mount Pangaion, Peisistratos amassed wealth and secured the services of Thracian mercenaries, both of which he continued to exploit as a means of holding on to power at Athens (Hdt. 1.59–64; see also [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 14–15). It is likely that Peisistratos' Thracian mercenaries not only served as a means of personal protection and a safeguard of his power, but also took part in the decisive engagement at Pallene. The link between the Peisistratids and Thrace continued throughout the following decades, as Hippias and the members of his family fled to Sigeion once they had been expelled from Athens (Hdt. 5.94; Thuc. 6.59).

In the fifth century, we know from the Athenian Tribute Lists that many coastal cities in Thrace were members of the Athenian-led Delian League (Meritt, McGregor, and Wade-Gery 1950, 204–207, 214–223). Despite the official foreign policy objectives of Athens, it is important to note that Athenian links to Thrace during the first half of the century were maintained by none other than Kimon, the son of the younger Miltiades. Kimon represented the third generation of the Philaid family's interests in Thrace. In 476 Kimon led an expedition to Eion, a city on the mouth of the Strymon River under the control of the Persians. After a destructive siege, during which the Persians left the city in ruins before being expelled from the area, Kimon took control of the city's beautiful and fertile territory, which he promptly handed over to the Athenian people. The Athenians held Kimon in high honor for providing them with such valuable land. A decade later, Kimon secured for Athens the Thracian Chersonese, which had for a period succumbed to Persian control after the younger Miltiades had left the area in the 490s. After this feat, Kimon put down a revolt on the island of Thasos after a long siege spanning two years between 465–463. In the process he acquired for Athens the lucrative gold mines on the mainland opposite, in the so-called Thasian Peraia (Hdt. 7.107; Thuc. 1.98.1; 100.2; Plut., *Kimon* 7–8, 14).

A few decades would pass before Kimon's success was followed. An inscription records that around 445 an Athenian colony was established somewhere in the vicinity of the Strymon at a place called Brea, whose precise location (along with most of its history) is unknown (IG I³ 46 = Meiggs and Lewis 1989, 128–133, no. 49). Another site, dubbed *Ennea Hodoi*

(Nine Ways), known to archaeology as Hill 133 commanding a good defensive position at a bend in the Strymon, had been attractive to a series of would-be colonists from the beginning of fifth century (see Pritchett 1980, 298–346). Ennea Hodoi could serve as a depot to collect timber from regions further up the Strymon, and it was located adjacent to the gold mines of Mount Pangaion. Two notable attempts had been made to settle the site in the 490s, respectively by Histiaios the tyrant of Miletus and his nephew, Aristagoras. Histiaios, initially granted the right to settle on the Strymon as a reward for his service to the Persians, was a wily figure, causing many Persians to question whether he should occupy such a strategically valuable position. On the advice of Megabazus, Darius found a pretense to summon Histiaios to duty in Susa. Megabazus' instincts were proved right when Histiaios later fomented the Ionian Revolt by sending secret messages from Susa to his nephew. For his part, Aristagoras, after leading the Ionians in their failed revolt, retreated to the territory on the Strymon where he met a grisly fate at the hands of the local Thracians (Hdt. 5.124, 126; Thuc. 4.102; Diod. 12.68.1–2). The first Athenian foray to the area occurred in 465, about the same time Kimon was dealing with Thasos. An expedition of some 10,000 Athenian settlers under the command of Sophanes and Leagros attempted to occupy Ennea Hodoi. This group, along with its leaders, was massacred by the local Thracians, mostly of the Edonian tribe, at the nearby site of Drabeskos, marking the third failed Greek attempt to establish a foothold up the Strymon (Hdt. 9.75; Thuc. 4.102; Diod. 12.68; Paus. 1.29.4-5).

The Athenian Hagnon would finally break the curse of Ennea Hodoi. In 437/6 he led another group of Athenians to settle the site. Through a combination of shrewd diplomacy and displays of military might, Hagnon founded a lasting city, which he named Amphipolis because it was surrounded on three sides by the river (Thuc. 4.102–103, 106; Diod. 12.68.3). There is evidence that Hagnon appealed to the local Thracians through measures such as setting up cults to Thracian deities, and he also won several military engagements against the Edonians (see Isaac 1986, 55–58; Archibald 1998, 101, 117). Once the city was established, Hagnon fortified it with a citadel and circuit wall of nearly unparalleled grandeur. Athens, however, would lose the city to the Spartan Brasidas during the first half of the Peloponnesian War. Athens made several diplomatic and military efforts to reacquire the site, both during the Peloponnesian War and for the next several decades. In each case Athens was unsuccessful. The loss of such a strategic site was a devastating psychological blow to the Athenians that they were never able to forget. In conjunction with the Thracian Chersonese, concern for the region of Amphipolis and the mainland opposite Thasos drove much of Athens' foreign policy well into the fourth century.

At the outset of the Peloponnesian War, Athens allied itself formally with Sitalkes, king of the Odrysians (Thuc. 2.29). The Odrysians were a tribe of

Thracians that managed for several decades from the mid fifth century to form a loose confederation of several Thracian groups throughout southeastern Thrace. Despite breaking apart in the early fourth century, the Odrysian kingdom was the longest-lasting and widest-ranging unified Thracian political entity in antiquity, studied in depth by Zofia Archibald (1998). Sitalkes himself was quite rich and powerful, and had an enormous store of soldiers and cavalry on which to call. Though the alliance with Athens started out on the grandest terms – Sitalkes' son lived in Athens and was made an Athenian citizen – militarily it did not amount to much. Sitalkes planned a large-scale invasion of Macedonia in 429/8, and the Athenians sent along several leading military men, including Hagnon, to serve as generals on the campaign. In the end, however, Athens failed to deliver the agreed level of support for the invasion, and the expedition accomplished little (Thuc. 2.95–101).

Athens did, however, make extensive use of Thracian mercenaries during the Peloponnesian War. Two episodes stand out in particular. For the final engagement leading to the famous capture of some 300 Lakedaimonians on the island of Sphakteria in 425, the Athenian general Demosthenes employed hundreds of light-armed troops from Athens' northern allies, principally those cities located in Thrace. Many if not most of these troops were Thracian mercenaries, fighting in the light-armed peltast style for which the Thracians were famous. These troops were procured by the infamous demagogue Kleon, who promised the Athenian assembly that he would bring about the defeat of the Spartans stranded on the island using only non-hoplite allied troops (Thuc. 4.26–41).

Thucydides' account of the year 413 yields a much darker episode in the Athenian use of Thracian soldiers. A group of 1300 Thracians from the independent mountain-dwelling tribe of the Dioi had arrived in Athens to serve on the Sicilian Expedition. The Dioi, however, arrived too late and were sent back to Thrace under the command of an Athenian named Dietrephes. En route, Dietrephes led the Thracian mercenaries against the Boeotian town of Mykalessos, lying a few miles from the Euripos Strait separating Boeotia from Euboea. Since Mykalessos was shut off from the sea by range of mountains, its inhabitants did not expect a sea-borne attack – its walls, for instance, had fallen into a state of disrepair. At dawn, after camping out on a mountain pass a short distance from the town, the Dioi burst into Mykalessos and slaughtered all the inhabitants, including men, women, children, and even livestock. In the mayhem, they also burst into a boys' school and killed all the children inside. Thucydides grimly remarks that the fate of Mykalessos was the most pitiable event of the entire 27-year-long war (Thuc. 7.27, 29–30).

Thrace featured prominently in the last phase of the Peloponnesian War, the naval conflict known as the Ionian War that followed the disastrous Athenian expedition to Sicily. During this period, several Athenian generals, including Thrasyboulos and Alcibiades, were active in the northern Aegean, putting

down revolts, securing resources from willing and unwilling states alike, and seeking to maintain control of the Aegean and the trade routes into the Black Sea (see Andrewes 1953). With the help of Persian money, Sparta was eventually able to challenge Athenian naval supremacy. The final engagement of the war saw the Athenian navy crushed in Thrace, along the Chersonese at Aigospotamoi, in 405.

Following the war, Sparta for a time was the undisputed hegemon of much of the Aegean. Athens therefore had little official influence in the north. In this context, the Athenian Xenophon, returning from Asia in 399 with the remnants of the Ten Thousand who had fought as mercenaries for the Persian pretender Cyrus, took up military service with the Thracian dynast Seuthes. The Odrysian kingdom had begun to fragment, and Seuthes was attempting to wrest control and territory away from another Thracian ruler, Amadokos. In a reversal of the typical arrangement, whereby Thracians were employed by the Greeks, Xenophon and some of the Ten Thousand fought as mercenaries on behalf of Seuthes and managed to conquer a fair amount of territory. As a reward for his services, Xenophon was promised his own lucrative estates in Thrace, on which he could have lived as Miltiades and the Philaids had a century earlier. Eventually, however, Xenophon fell out of favor with Seuthes and entered the service of the Spartans instead (Xen., *Anab.* 7; see Stronk 1995).

The fourth century would see Athens trying to regain much of its former influence in Thrace, while striving to hold on to whatever Thracian territory it still managed to possess. Athens continued to use Thracian mercenaries, and achieved some success with them. Most famously, near Corinth in 390, the Athenian commander Iphikrates managed to defeat an entire division of 600 Spartans using only Thracian peltasts (Xen., *Hell.* 4.5). This same Iphikrates would later lead an Athenian mission to the Chersonese, only to lose the region once again to the Spartans (Xen., *Hell.* 4.8.33–35). Thrasyboulos, who had earlier served in Thrace during the Ionian War, returned to the region in the early 380s, this time as Iphikrates' replacement in the Chersonese. There, Thrasyboulos engineered a rapprochement between the rival Thracian rulers Seuthes and Amadokos, securing for Athens the alliance of both (Xen., *Hell.* 4.8.26). Iphikrates continued to be called upon for his Thracian connections. He was sent to Thrace once again in the 360s, this time to retake Amphipolis, where he was again unsuccessful. Instead of returning home to face possible prosecution for his military failure, Iphikrates remained in Thrace and acted as the military agent of the Odrysian king Kotys. He even married Kotys' daughter and perhaps led Kotys' Thracians in a naval battle against Athens itself (Dem. 23, esp. 130; see Harris 1989).

By the middle of the century, Philip of Macedon emerged as a force to be reckoned with in the north Aegean. Many of Demosthenes' invective speeches against Philip – particularly the *Olynthiacs* – protest Athenian

inaction in responding to Philip's gains in Thrace. Athens sent many expeditions to Thrace and forged several alliances with Thracian kings in this period, especially to safeguard its holdings in the Chersonese and support its claims to Amphipolis. A surviving inscription details a treaty made in 357 between Athens and the three Thracian rulers – Kersobleptes, Bersiades, and Amadokos – who squabbled over a divided Odrysian kingdom after the death of Kotys. The treaty guaranteed Athens the right to collect tribute from many of the Greek cities along the northern Aegean coast. The cities in question seem to have been tributary subjects both to the Thracian kings and to Athens, an indication of Athens' continued ability to assert influence over Thracian territory (IG II² 126 = Rhodes and Osborne 2003, 234–238, no. 47). Despite a measure of Athenian success, Philip eventually annexed virtually the entirety of Thrace to his kingdom. After the Battle of Chaeronea in 338, Athens was deprived of any capability of projecting power across the sea. The Athenians did grant citizenship to Rheboulas, brother of Kotys, in 331/0, which might have been connected to a Thracian revolt against Alexander (IG II² 349; see Schwenk 1985, 225–227), but meaningful Athenian ties to Thrace had essentially come to an end.

20.3 Military Influence of Thrace

Thrace naturally had an impact on the Athenians over the course of such a long interaction. Given that a majority of contact between Athens and Thrace was in some sense military – either adversarial or cooperative – Thracian influence is most readily apparent in the military sphere.

The Thracian peltast, named for his small crescent-shaped shield, or *pelte*, was a light-armed skirmisher who took advantage of his relative speed and mobility to harass enemy troops with an armament of several javelins. This type of soldier was not only readily available from Athens' northern allies in the Thracian region, his fighting style provided a nice complement or counterpart to the heavy-armed Greek citizen hoplite, as discussed at length by Jan Best (1969). Peltasts begin to appear in Attic art in the mid to late sixth century – about the time Peisistratos and the elder Miltiades were active in Thrace – but they were not used as a regular feature of Athenian armies until the Peloponnesian War.

In 425 peltasts from Thrace and from Athens' Greek allies in the north Aegean played a key part in capturing the 300 Lakedaimonians trapped on Sphakteria. In conjunction with Athenian hoplites, the Athenian generals Demosthenes and Kleon deployed hundreds of light-armed troops on the island who were able to harass, wound, and kill the Lakedaimonian hoplites with ease. The Lakedaimonians desperately sought to engage the Athenian hoplites in battle, but upon every Lakedaimonian advance, the Athenians'

light-armed allies swarmed in from all sides. The Lakedaimonians eventually fled to the northernmost point of the island, where steep cliffs protected their rear. An enterprising Messenian ally of the Athenians offered to scale the cliffs with a contingent of light troops to surround the Lakedaimonians, which he succeeded in doing. Outnumbered, exhausted, and utterly confounded by their light-armed opponents, the Lakedaimonians surrendered, cementing the greatest Athenian land victory of the Peloponnesian War (Thuc. 4.32–38). The Athenian general Demosthenes had first learned the value of light-armed troops during an earlier campaign, in which his hoplites had been roughly handled by the skirmishers of Aetolia (Thuc. 3.94–98). Athens' ties to Thrace furnished the general with an opportunity to make use of such troops himself. Though the Lakedaimonians poured scorn on the manner of the Athenian victory in 425 (Thuc. 4.40), the usefulness of Thracian-style light-armed troops was manifest.

As a general with the Ten Thousand at the turn of the fourth century, Xenophon proved himself a capable innovator of light-armed tactics. Journeying from deep within the Persian Empire, the Greek hoplites found themselves continually threatened by fast and mobile enemy horsemen. On several occasions Xenophon compensated for the hoplites' lack of speed and maneuverability by having the numerous peltasts who had accompanied the Ten Thousand occupy the high ground and provide cover for the hoplites' march. From the heights, the peltasts were more than capable of dealing with the Asiatic enemy, allowing the hoplites to advance in relative safety (see, e.g., Xen., *Anab.* 6.3). Eventually, in 399, Xenophon and his troops arrived in the vicinity of Byzantium and southeastern Thrace, where they entered the mercenary service of Seuthes. Seuthes was well equipped with peltasts and cavalry, but he lacked heavy-armed shock troops. With Seuthes, Xenophon formed a versatile and formidable combined-arms force that achieved much success against the Thracian villages Seuthes wanted to subdue. Xenophon showed a keen understanding of the proper use of different troop types by, for example, advising Seuthes to stagger the march of his forces through the night. Xenophon instructed the heavier troops to begin the march earlier, followed by the light-armed infantry, and finally the cavalry. In this way, all the troops arrived together in the morning, without the differences in speed leading to a separation of forces (*Anab.* 7.3.37–39).

A decade later, in 390, Thracian peltasts achieved their most famous feat of arms when Iphikrates led a group of mercenary peltasts to victory over a 600-strong division, or *mora*, of Spartan hoplites at Corinth's port of Lechaion (see Konecny 2001). The fearsome Spartan hoplites held the light-armed mercenaries in contempt, brazenly moving past the peltasts' position in line of march with their unshielded right sides exposed. Iphikrates, trusting in the long training with which he had honed the peltasts' skill and cohesion, ordered his soldiers to attack. Entirely on their own, unsupported by cavalry

or hoplites, the peltasts attacked the Spartans in small detachments, hurling javelins and then withdrawing at ease. Harried, injured, and dying in some numbers, the Spartans attempted to counter by sending out the youngest hoplites in pursuit. The peltasts then displayed the value of the discipline they had acquired during several years under Iphikrates' command. They withdrew far enough to lead the younger Spartans a good distance away from the protection of the phalanx's numbers, at which time the peltasts wheeled about and cut down the pursuing individual hoplites. For their part, the Spartans were supported by cavalry, but the horsemen refused to set off after the peltasts, striving instead to maintain a continuous front with the phalanx and thereby eliminating the advantages of swift horses. The Spartans eventually withdrew, having lost some 250 of their 600 hoplites, a devastating blow made all the more painful by the nature of the troops arrayed against them. Iphikrates' spectacular success would not soon be surpassed, given that he had enjoyed the luxury of developing within his mercenary force an esprit de corps over long months of continuous campaigning (see Pritchett 1974, 117). But from then on Greek armies would ignore the potential of the peltast at their own peril.

As the fourth century progressed, more and more leaders adopted combined-arms forces, in which peltasts usually played key roles. The most famous military advances in this period were made by leaders such as Jason of Pherai, who used his vast wealth to employ seemingly numberless peltasts and cavalry, Epameinondas of Thebes, who supplemented his newly organized phalanx with light-armed and mounted troops, and Philip of Macedon, crafting a new war machine based on a deft combination of heavy phalanx, heavy and light cavalry, and light-armed skirmishers. In the hands of his son Alexander, Philip's combined-arms force proved unbeatable and conquered the Persian Empire. Many of the trends that culminated in Philip and Alexander were begun under Athenians such as Demosthenes, Xenophon, and Iphikrates, due largely to the extensive experience many Athenians had in Thrace and with Thracian soldiers. Even when direct Thracian influence on tactics is less evident, several of Athens' most prominent military figures, such as the younger Miltiades, Kimon, Hagnon, and Alcibiades, campaigned for long periods in Thrace, where they no doubt honed their military talents and passed on the lessons learned to other Athenian soldiers.

20.4 Athenian Attitudes to Thrace and the Thracians

As we have seen, Athenian ties to Thrace featured prominently in Athenian political and military history. Aside from the many Athenians who would have had contact with Thracians through various military and diplomatic missions to the north Aegean, there was also a large number of Thracians living at Athens itself, both as free metics and as slaves. It is hardly

surprising, then, that Athenian art and literature treats the Thracians extensively. While the Thracians are often stereotyped as uncivilized and uncultured barbarians, strange bedfellows to say the least of the epicenter of Greek culture and learning, they also possessed an enduring allure.

Herodotus, not himself an Athenian but certainly a figure who spent a great deal of time in Athens, devotes several chapters of the fifth book of his *Histories* to an ethnographic description of the Thracians (5.1–10). As is his wont, Herodotus focuses on those aspects of the Thracians that the Greeks would have found most marvelous or absurd, such as the custom of suttee – whereby the favored of several wives was killed and buried along with her polygamous husband – and the supposed practice on the part of many Thracians of selling their own children into slavery. Herodotus famously says that the Thracians are second only to the Indians in terms of population, and were they to unite behind a common purpose, no nation on earth could withstand them. The Thracians, however, lack the requisite political sophistication for such unification, and therefore remain divided and weak. While conceding some admirable traits to the Thracians, such the fierce resistance offered by the Getai to the Persians (4.93), Herodotus leaves the reader with an impression of contempt mitigated by curiosity.

The playwrights were frequently much harsher in their description of Thracians. Euripides, in his *Hecuba* produced during the early years of the Peloponnesian War, highlights Thracian barbarity and treachery through the character of Polymestor, a king of the Thracians in the Chersonese. Polymestor, known only from this play and probably invented by Euripides, murdered a young son of Priam, Polydorus, who had been entrusted to Polymestor's care during the Trojan War. The reason given for the vile murder was Polymestor's desire to steal the Trojan prince's gold. Sophocles wrote a play roughly contemporaneous with *Hecuba*, the now lost *Tereus*. The title character is a Thracian king who rapes and mutilates the sister of his Athenian wife, whom he married to secure a dynastic relationship with the king of Athens. Both plays seem to present a warning against forging alliances with the Thracians, a particularly relevant theme given Athens' ties to Sitalkes at the time.

Thucydides offers a somewhat different take on barbarians like the Thracians. Thucydides, it should be noted, was himself partly of Thracian descent. His father Oloros was probably a Thracian noble, maybe even the son of the younger Miltiades who in the late sixth century had married the daughter of a Thracian ruler also named Oloros. After failing as a general to protect Amphipolis from Brasidas and therefore being exiled from Athens, Thucydides retired to his own estates in Thrace, on the mainland opposite Thasos. In his discussion of Greek prehistory, known as the Archaeology, Thucydides presents an evolutionary view of social and cultural history, that is, he argues that the barbarians of his own day live as the Greeks themselves

once had (1.5–6). Barbarians are not, then, fundamentally different from the Greeks, but are simply at an earlier stage of societal and cultural evolution. Such a view accords well with the predominant scholarly approach to peripheral peoples up until the last couple of decades. Namely, if the Thracians changed over time, it was in the direction of becoming increasingly Hellenized.

The representation of Thracians in Attic art is similarly ambiguous. On the one hand, certain Thracians, such as peltast warriors, are frequently employed to represent the antithesis of the good Greek hoplite. Even the very vessels on which peltasts appear are more at home in the women's quarters than the aristocratic male symposium, which, as Robin Osborne (2000) argues, is a further comment on the social status of such Thracians. Thracians are often associated in art with satyrs and other Dionysiac imagery, evoking drunkenness and uncivilized barbarity. On the other hand, many vases and even the Parthenon frieze depict Athenian horsemen wearing distinctively Thracian clothing – such as the unmistakable patterned cloak known as the *zeira*. François Lissarrague (1990) argues that Thracian imagery was employed by aristocratic Athenian knights to set themselves apart from the mass of Athenians in terms of social class. Why specifically Thracian attributes were chosen as a mark of social distinction is difficult to ascertain, but clearly some Athenians did not think of the Thracians merely as savages. That Thracians are depicted so frequently in Attic art suggests an Athenian fascination with the Thracians, much as with the Persians in the decades following the Persian Wars so fascinatingly discussed by Margaret Miller (1997).

Ambiguities abound also in the position of the Thracians living at Athens. From the late sixth century on, Thracians were frequently used as slaves in Attica. The Thracian became the stereotypical image of the slave in literature and art, as exemplified in Aristophanes' slave character Xanthias, whose very name means "Blondie" – a physical characteristic commonly associated with Thracians (see Rosivach 1999). The Attic Stelai, a record of property seized from those accused of desecrating the Herms before the Athenian expedition to Sicily in 415, show that a high proportion of the confiscated slaves were Thracian. There were also many Thracians working the silver mines at Laurion, attested both epigraphically and archaeologically (Morris 2011, 184–185). There were, however, many free Thracians living at Athens, particularly in the port of Piraeus. These Thracians – apparently alone of all ethnic groups in the polis at that time – were granted by the Athenians the right to construct a shrine to their goddess Bendis, a figure closely associated with Artemis (see Planeaux 2000). The Thracians were not alone in worshipping this deity on Attic soil, as the Athenians themselves took part in what became a lavish festival. In the famous opening lines of Plato's *Republic* Socrates describes attending the first celebration of the Bendideia, which included separate

processions of Thracians and Athenians, and other intriguing events including a horseback torch race and all-night celebration.

The evidence as it stands allows of no simple interpretation of Athenian attitudes toward the Thracians. Aside from the ambivalent way in which the majority of Athenians conceived of Thrace and the Thracians, Greece's neighbors to the north proved particularly fascinating to certain Athenian elites.

20.5 Athenian Thracophiles

Ties to Athens influenced many Thracians a great deal, to which the increasing prevalence of Attic pottery and prestige goods at Thracian sites attests (see Owen 2006). Contact with Greeks naturally led to the adoption of various Greek practices, including in some cases the use of the Greek language (as seen in the early to mid-fourth-century Vetren Inscription, transcribed in Chankowski and Domaradzka 1999 and discussed and translated in Tacheva 2007). Influence went both ways, however. The Greek states in the north Aegean, lying on the edge of Thrace, adopted Thracian tactics in their own armies, deploying contingents of peltasts and cavalry much earlier and more extensively than did most Greek states to the south (see Isaac 1986, 103–104, 153). At times scholars have a difficult time distinguishing Thracian mercenaries from Thracian-style fighters serving in the citizen armies of Greek poleis in the Thracian region (Best 1969, 85–97; Pritchett 1974, 118). Religious syncretism was also common. On the island of Thasos, for instance, the Greek inhabitants incorporated existing Thracian sacred structures into their own worship, the result being a cult that was neither fully Greek nor fully Thracian (Owen 2000). The worship of Artemis Tauropolos and Rhesus at Amphipolis seems to be another example of religious hybridization (see Isaac 1986, 55–58; Archibald 1998, 101). Instead of conceiving of Greco-Thracian relations as leading to a one-sided process of Hellenization on the part of the Thracians, we should instead think of both peoples undergoing a process of hybridization or cultural entanglement, in which all parties influence others and are in turn influenced themselves. Because Athens was heavily involved in Thrace for so long, it experienced cultural exchange in ways similar to the Greek cities of the region. This exchange was most pronounced in the particular Athenian leaders who drove the relationship between Athens and Thrace, those whom we might usefully call Thracophiles.

The reasons for an Athenian to turn to Thrace were manifold. For one thing, military victories anywhere, including in Thrace, were often a stepping stone to further political power at Athens. Kimon, for instance, grew in popularity and influence following his expeditions to the Chersonese and the region surrounding Thasos. He also grew in wealth. Thrace was very resource-rich,

and many others were able to exploit mining rights and lucrative estates and the like to add to their personal fortunes, seen perhaps most famously in Thucydides' retirement to his own mines and properties in Thrace after he was exiled. Thucydides' case is instructive. Not only did he use his Thracian connections to amass wealth and probably also a prestigious military command in the region, he was also able to turn to Thrace as a refuge once he fell out of favor at Athens. Alcibiades and Iphikrates would do likewise, the former after having been driven out of Athens for a second time after losing the naval Battle of Notion, the latter on two separate occasions, after losing the Hellespont to the Spartans in the 380s and failing to take Amphipolis in the 360s. Iphikrates' case has been described in detail by Edward Harris (1989), who offers a stimulating discussion on the dangers faced by unsuccessful Athenian generals at the hands of the demos.

While, as we have seen, many of these Athenians adopted various Thracian military practices, they seem also to have been attracted to certain elements of Thracian culture. Along with politics, Athenian society and culture became increasingly egalitarian from the sixth century on, a phenomenon which stifled the expression of aristocratic pretension. Solon's famous sumptuary laws limiting the ostentation of funerals were but part of a wider phenomenon edging out the traditional ways in which the upper classes could distinguish themselves from the mass of ordinary Athenians (Plut., Solon 21). In Thrace, however, aristocrats and rulers were expected to engage in the boar hunt, to exchange valuable gifts at lavish feasts, and to lord their regal authority over the common people. In other words, Thracian aristocrats lived as Greek – and even Athenian – aristocrats once had. Xenophon recounts a splendid dinner thrown by Seuthes in which wine and meat were abundant and the host was presented with objects of great value by an assortment of noble guests, a feast of literally Homeric proportions (Anab. 7.3.21–33). Iphikrates' wedding to the daughter of Kotys was apparently an affair of similar grandiosity, ridiculed by the comic poet Anaxandrides (F 42 Kassel-Austin). Hoards of gold and silver drinking vessels dating to the fifth and fourth centuries have been found throughout Bulgaria, some of which are inscribed with the name of Kotys, who may be identical to the great Odrysian king (see Cook 1989; Zournatzi 2000). In the sixth century, the elder Miltiades was honored by his subjects in the Chersonese with funeral games reminiscent of those for Patroklos, a distinction hardly afforded Miltiades' contemporaries at Athens (Hdt. 6.38). As Thrace served as a source of power and refuge, it might also have been an attractive cultural alternative to the birthplace of democracy. As a segment of the Athenian elite portrayed themselves in art wearing Thracian clothing and carrying Thracian equipment, Athenian Thracophiles might have assimilated somewhat to the culture of Thracian nobility. Some Athenians found in Thrace a ready-made set of cultural symbols to compensate for those lost in the rise of equality among Athenian citizens.

Athenians were often uneasy about the foreign activities and connections of Thracophiles. In his lost play *Gerytades*, Aristophanes pokes fun at those he calls Thraikophoitai, literally “Thrace-haunters” (F 156 Kassel-Austin). Often the citizenship credentials of Athenians who spent too much time in Thrace were called into question, as in the case of Dieitrephes, the Athenian commander who presided over the massacre at Mykalessos, who was labeled as barely Athenian, “mogis Attikos,” by the comedian Plato Comicus (F 30 Kassel-Austin). Political rivals of Thracophiles could threaten to bring charges of xenia, that is, passing oneself or one’s foreign-born children off as Athenian citizens. Timotheus promised to do just that to Iphikrates in the mid fourth century, a poignant threat given that Iphikrates’ son was the product of his marriage to a Thracian princess ([Dem.] 49.56). More seriously, the orator Lysias suggested that Thrasyboulos was guilty of treason, conspiring to commandeer an Athenian fleet, seize Athenian interests in Thrace for his own uses, and marry a Thracian princess (28.8). While such allegations appear to be no more than rhetorical bluster on the part of Lysias, they are not too far off in the case of Iphikrates a couple of decades later.

In the end, long ties to Thrace inevitably had an effect on Athenian society and culture, in addition to politics and warfare. Some of those best poised to be among the cultural elite of Athens also happened to be those leading expeditions to Thrace and forging relationships with Thracian tribes and rulers. Like many facets of the Atheno-Thracian connection, personal interests in Thrace were received with mixed feelings at Athens. Like Thrace itself, Athens’ Thracophiles were crucial to Athenian interests. The Athenian need for Thrace, however, did not always translate into ready Athenian acceptance of the Thracians and those Athenians who made their careers among Greece’s neighbors to the north.

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Guide to Further Reading

Harris, Edward M. 1989. “Iphicrates at the Court of Cotys.” *American Journal of Philology*, 110: 264–271. An important study of an Athenian general finding refuge in Thrace to avoid prosecution at Athens.

Isaac, Benjamin H. 1986. *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*. Leiden: Brill. A valuable and concise survey of the history of Greek settlements along the northern Aegean and eastern Black Sea on a region by region basis. Makes good use of archaeological evidence where literary texts are lacking.

Lissarrague, François. 1990. *L’autre guerrier: archers, peltastes, cavaliers dans l’imagerie attique*. Paris: École française de Rome. This volume provides an essential analysis of the depictions of foreign warriors, including Thracians, in Attic vase-painting.

Moreno, Alfonso. 2007. *Feeding the Democracy: The Athenian Grain Supply in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Though dealing primarily with Scythians, this book discusses the ways in which Athenian elites exploited contacts with foreign barbarians to cement political power at home.

Planeaux, Christopher. 2000. "The Date of Bendis' Entry into Attica." *Classical Journal*, 96: 165–192. A good starting point for the worship of the Thracian goddess Bendis in Athens and the implications this had for Atheno-Thracian relations.

Pritchett, W. K. 1974. "The Condottieri of the Fourth Century." In *The Greek State at War, Part II*, 59–116. Berkeley: University of California Press. The most thorough discussion available of the supposedly rogue Athenian generals of the fourth century, including the Thracophile Iphicrates.

Sears, Matthew A. 2013. *Athens, Thrace, and the Shaping of Athenian Leadership*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. A comprehensive look at the two-century relationship between Athens and Thrace, exploring the ways Thrace influenced Athenian political, social, and cultural history.

Stylianou, Jan P. 1998. *The Ten Thousand in Thrace: An Archaeological and Historical Commentary on Xenophon's Anabasis, Books VI.iii–vi–VII*. Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben. A valuable companion to the Athenian Xenophon's account of his time in Thrace as a mercenary in the service of the Thracian ruler Seuthes.

Tsiafakis, Despoina. 2000. "The Allure and Repulsion of Thracians in the Art of Classical Athens." In *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art*, edited by Beth Cohen, 364–389. Leiden: Brill. Offers a concise overview of Thracian imagery in Athens, concluding that the Thracians were not simply fearsome or ridiculous enemies, but generally fascinating "others."

Tzvetkova, Julia. 2008. *History of the Thracian Chersonese (from the Trojan War until the Time of the Roman Conquest)*. Veliko Tamovo: Faber. An up-to-date and comprehensive survey of the Thracian Chersonese, in Bulgarian but with a lengthy English summary.

Chapter 21

Persia

Maya Vassileva

21.1 Persians in Thrace

Oriental influences had been felt before the Persians invaded the Balkans (ca. 513).¹ Eighth–seventh-century bronzes from Thrace reflected a style and a repertoire of objects that had been common in the Iranian world after an adaptation of earlier Near Eastern prototypes (Venedikov 1969; Venedikov and Gerassimov 1973, 25–33). A number of other features of early Thracian “geometric art” echoed Oriental traits and reached Thrace via Anatolia. Most of them were further sustained and developed in later times influenced greatly by Achaemenid art.

These are however only the most easily visible results from the interactions between Thrace and the Oriental world best represented in the second half of the first millennium by the Achaemenid Empire. Historical processes, as well as military, political, and trade activities could be considered within the framework of the Persian impact on southeastern European lands. However, impact in this chapter refers to the results that more or less can be assigned to the direct encounter between Thracians and Persians and to the presence of the latter in Thracian lands. Influence is used to denote long-term, often mediated and locally reshaped Achaemenid elements in Thracian culture. The latter of course would include adoption, adaptation, and emulation (on influence and emulation: Miller 2007).

The Thracian lands came into direct contact with the Iranians when the Achaemenid Empire spread over Anatolia and the Great King launched expeditions against the Skythians, Macedonia, and eventually Hellas. The Thracians living in Asia were the first to experience Persian rule when Asia Minor was subjugated (the fall of Sardis: ca. 546).

European Thracians encountered the Persian army on Darius I’s (520–486) campaign against the Skythians in 513 when the Great King marched through eastern Thrace to reach the Istros River (Danube) (Fol and Hammond 1988, 235–243). After crossing the Bosphorus over a pontoon bridge, Darius proceeded through Thrace. The Persian army stopped for three days at the sources of the Tearus (Hdt. 4.90–91). The river is not securely identified: it was probably a smaller tributary of the Agrianes (Ergene) which in its turn flowed into the Hebros River (Maritsa). After commemorating the fine water of the springs with an inscribed stela Darius moved further into Thrace, reaching the Arteskos River which flowed through the land of the Odrysians

(Hdt. 4.92). The route of the Persian army to the north is widely debated (see for example: Venedikov 1970; Tuplin 2010, 285–286); the coastal Pontic (Black Sea) road, which led from Heraion on the Propontis (the Sea of Marmara) to Apollonia Pontica (Sozopol), is preferred by a number of scholars (Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007, 645). It seems less likely that the Persians would have turned west and gone much inland in Thrace. Herodotus, who is our main source for the Persian activities in Thrace, says that the Thracians of Salmydessos and those who lived beyond Apollonia and Messambria, known as Skyrmiadai and Nipsaioi, surrendered to the Great King. The first serious resistance he met was offered by the Getae, “the most manly and law-abiding of the Thracian tribes,” who lived in northeastern Thrace and were finally reduced to slavery by the Persians (Hdt. 4.93). The unnamed Thracians of Salmydessos were most probably the Thynoi (Thynians).

If we are to believe Herodotus, the Thracians must have observed imperial propaganda and representation of royal status by Darius I during his march through eastern Thrace. First, near Byzantium he erected two stelae with inscriptions in “Assyrian” and Greek letters (Hdt. 4.87), then the inscription at the Tearus River (the script and language are not specified) (Hdt. 4.91), and, finally, at the Arteskos River the Great King made every soldier deposit a stone in passing by, thus leaving huge heaps of stones behind the army (Hdt. 4.92). Setting up stelae or statues with texts in several languages is not an uncommon Achaemenid practice: such were set up by Darius in Egypt (Asheri et al. 2007, 644). Isolated communications about finds, long lost, have not been confirmed, thus archaeological evidence is simply missing about such monuments in the Balkans (Balcer 1995, 150). Nevertheless, we can connect Herodotus’ evidence with the practice of leaving royal marks at far lands and natural phenomena reached by the Persians.

Before crossing back over to Asia, Darius left Megabazos as *strategos* (commander) ordering him to conquer Thrace (Hdt. 5.2). The conquest of Thrace was a multi-staged operation that started with Darius I’s Skythian campaign and was further carried out by Megabazos, Mardonios, and finally Xerxes (Balcer 1988, 8–13). Despite Herodotus’ statement that Thrace was occupied up to the Istros (Hdt. 4.99), his further account of Persian activities show that their control was exercised along the northern Aegean coast (clearly stated about Megabazos’ campaign: Hdt. 5.10: *ta parathalassia*; Picard 2000, 241).

Persian power was most unstable in the area of the Propontis and the Hellespont (the Dardanelles) where they had to subdue Byzantium several times in addition to other poleis that were reconquered. The area was equally attractive to Persians, Athenians and Thracians.

Megabazos first subdued the Perinthians and then continued further west. He was ordered by Darius to reduce the Paeonians and deport them to Asia. With

the help of Thracian guides he started for Paeonia and was able to overcome its inhabitants only by a deceit. The tribes near Mt. Pangaion and on the Lake Prasias (present-day Lake Doyran) were not conquered (Hdt. 5.15–16). Persian envoys were sent to the court of Amyntas I, king of Macedonia, to ask for “earth and water” for the Great King (Hdt. 5.18). Amyntas’ young son, Alexander I, managed treacherously to kill Persian heralds after a lavish feast (Hdt. 5.19–21). Despite this slaughter Macedonia was not punished and maintained good relations with the Achaemenids as Alexander’s sister Gygaie was given as wife to the Persian Bubares. The event more resembles a dynastic marriage on concluding a treaty than the action of a subdued country (Balcer 1995, 155). The Macedonian king was only nominally the Great King’s vassal. The actual situation can be deduced from Herodotus’ statement that later, in 492, Mardonios added Macedonia to the conquered lands (Hdt. 6.44).

When Megabazos leading the Paeonians to Asia reached Sardis he was replaced by Otanes as commander of the coastal area (*strategon tōn parathalassiōn andrōn*). The latter had to recapture Byzantium, and then he conquered Chalkedon and the islands of Lemnos and Imbros, the latter still being inhabited by the Pelasgians (Hdt. 5.25–26).

The Ionian revolt (499–494) temporarily loosened Persian control over the Aegean. The Great King had to reconfirm his rule over Miletos and other Ionian cities and islands. A new military campaign was necessary for Achaemenid power to be resettled in Thrace and Macedonia.

In 492 Mardonios, Darius I’s son-in-law and general, started a military and naval campaign along the northern Aegean coast. Herodotus says that he first subdued Thasos without resistance and continued west towards the Macedonians. All peoples to the east of Macedonia were already under Persian rule. When trying to go around Athos, a violent gale raged and many Persian ships were wrecked. At the same time the troops on land suffered heavy losses by the Brygi, a Thracian tribe (Hdt. 6.45). Mardonios himself was wounded. Nevertheless, the Persians finally subdued the Brygi. The serious casualties suffered by the Persian army and fleet made Mardonios return back in Asia.

Scholars agree that only after Mardonios’ campaign to the west was Persian power stable and effective in Thrace, and Macedonia was now a vassal kingdom (Balcer 1988, 13). Scholars have long debated whether European Thrace was organized in a Persian satrapy, presumably called Skudra. Some tend to accept such a European satrapy (Fol and Hammond 1988, 43–46, although the reasons of the two authors differ; Jordanov 2003). Skudra and Skudrians are mentioned in royal inscriptions from the reign of Darius I and Xerxes among the subjects of the Persian Empire (four from Darius I’s reign: from Naqš-i Rostam, two from Suza, and on a statue of Darius from Suza: DNa, DSe, DSm; and one from Xerxes: XPh) (Kent 1953). They are listed

between the “Ionians wearing broad-brimmed hats,” or “Ionians who dwell across the sea” and “Pointed-cap Saka” or “Saka across the sea.” It is a common opinion that these Persian lists were not catalogues of satrapies or of tax and administrative units, but of peoples and countries that the Persian King claimed were under his rule (Briant 2002, 177). It is possible that the Thracian and Macedonian population along the northern Aegean coast was perceived by the Persians as Yaunâ (Ionians, Greeks). Representatives of the conquered peoples are portrayed on the façades of the Achaemenid royal rock-cut tombs at Naqš-e Rostam as throne bearers. Only on Darius I’s tomb are the figures labeled (No. 25: Schmidt 1970, 109–110, fig. 44). The Skudrian wears trousers, a knee-length coat, and holds two spears. Variations of his clothing and attributes (*petasos* and *akinakes*) appear on the other tombs and on the depiction of the Skudrian delegation on the Apadana reliefs in Persepolis (No. 19: Schmidt 1953, 89; Balcer 1988, 20; Rehm 2010a, 148; if this identification holds!). This “northern” attire however is used for representations of Skythians, Thracians, and Persians on Greek vases and suggests that Persians and Greeks alike did not mark a clear difference between Skythians and Thracians.

The identification of Skudra as Thrace has its opponents. Some opt for a location of Skudra in western Asia Minor (Kaloyanov 1988) or in northern central Anatolia (Pontos: Gropp 2001). An etymological hypothesis tries to explain the name through Iranian languages and bring it closer to the Skythian ethnonym, not convincingly (Rehm 2010a, 149; Tuplin 2010, 297). The name finds onomastic parallels in Thrace, Macedonia, and Asia Minor but cannot be defined as Thracian (Hdt. 7.30: *Kydrara* in Phrygia; Strabo 7.7.9: a Brygian city of *Kydrai*; Ptol. 3.12.36: *Skydra* in Emathia; Steph. Byz. 578.8: *Skydra*). Some authors stress the Phrygian parallels (Archibald 1998, 84 n. 29).

Skudra is also listed in later royal inscriptions when the Persians had long lost their control in Europe (Kent 1953; Balcer 1995, 153). Skudrians are attested in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets as a dependent population of agricultural workers (*kurtaš*) in Darius I’s royal estates in Persia and Elam (Balcer 1995, 154; Izdimirski 2009).² The hypothesis that these *kurtaš* were the Paeonians deported by Megabazos (Balcer 1995, 152; Archibald 1998, 84; Tuplin 2010, 298) lacks supporting evidence. The absence of Skudrians in the texts of Persepolis Treasury Tablets (dated 492–458) has not yet found a satisfactory explanation: it might be just accidental or due to the Persian withdrawal from Europe after 479 (Balcer 1995).

The words satrap and satrapy were only rarely used by Greek authors. Persian generals in charge of certain cities or areas along the northern Aegean were described as *hyparchos* or *strategos*. Their functions and activities there did not match those of a satrap. Although Herodotus says that eventually Darius I started receiving taxes from the European population up to Thessaly, he does not specify any administrative division there, or any particular income (Hdt.

3.96, 7.108). The archaeological record shows no evidence of Achaemenid administration or strong Persian presence, like the cylinder seals, bullae, and coins, for example, found in the satrapal centers at Sardis and Daskyleion, and in smaller numbers even in Gordion (Bacheva 2012, 14–17). None of the cities mentioned by the ancient authors as important Persian posts along the Aegean coast is a good candidate for a satrapal center (Balcer 1988, 3–4). Recent research has confirmed that newly subdued areas and countries on the fringes of the Achaemenid Empire (like Nubia, Libya, and Skudra) were to a different extent dependent territories, but were neither incorporated in the administrative division nor turned into satrapies (Balcer 1988; Briant 2002, 905).

The Thracians living in Asia, however, were included in the third satrapy or tax district (*nomos*), according to Herodotus (Hdt. 3.90), together with the population of the Hellespont, the Phrygians, the Paphlagonians, and the Mariandynians. These were the Bithynians who later joined Xerxes' army. Hypothesizing about a European satrapy combining the Hellespontine and Propontis areas ruled from Daskyleion is very tempting in view of the strategic points that would have thus been united, but lacks convincing evidence (Rehm 2010a, 151).

Thus, Persian control in Thrace and along the Aegean coast was exercised in strongholds and fortresses at strategic sites. The two major fortresses were the Royal Fort built by Darius I at Doriskos during his Skythian campaign, and Eion which had probably been established by 492. Sestos and Abydos were the preferred points for crossing to and from Europe. We do not know when Boryza was founded, but it is mentioned as a Persian city in the land of the Thynians, along the southwestern Black Sea coast (Hekataios: FGrHist 1F166; Steph. Byz. 176.11). The city is not located and the date of its foundation is debated: before or during Darius I's campaign against the Skythians (Detschew 1976, 76; Bacheva 2012, 13). It may have been another Persian garrison or stronghold on the Thracian coast not far from Byzantium.

In 480 in his campaign against Hellas, Xerxes (486–465) gathered military contingents from all subdued peoples. Herodotus mentioned among his Asian troops the Thracian contingent after the Phrygians and the Lydians, and before the Pisidians, describing in ethnographic detail their clothing and armor. He further specifies that these Thracians became known as Bithynians after they had migrated from the Strymon valley to Asia (Hdt. 7.75). The Phrygians used to be called Brygoi while they lived together with the Macedonians and changed their name only when they came to Anatolia (Hdt. 7.73). This detail is not mentioned when Mardonios suffered a defeat by the Brygoi in Europe, although Herodotus writes that such a story about the Phrygians was told by the Macedonians. Nevertheless, the Brygoi joined Xerxes' army (Hdt. 7.185).

The Great King seems to have marched through subjugated territories in coastal Thrace. Serious opposition is not reported. Herodotus enumerates the

Thracian tribes through whose territories the Persians advanced westward. His account is especially detailed for the southernmost Thracian lands, to the west of the Hebros River and near the mouths of the Nestos and the Strymon Rivers, where he names: Paitoi, Kikones, Bistones, Sapaioi, Dersaioi, Edoni, Satrai, Eordoi, Bottiaei, Brygoi, Pieres, Perraboi, Enienes, and Dolopes (Hdt. 7.110–111; 185).³ The Thracian population of the region both voluntarily and by force joined the Persian navy and army, and only the Satrai remained independent. The latter statement means that the Persians did not gain control over the Pangaion area where the Satrai lived. The only act of hostility was performed by the king of the Thracian Bisaltae and Krestonia who punished his six sons for their participation in the Persian expedition against Greece by gouging their eyes out (Hdt. 8.116). Herodotus says that the road which Xerxes' army took was held in reverence by the Thracians and remained untouched to his day: no crops were sown on it (Hdt. 7.115). Doriskos was still the major Persian fortress in Thrace where the Great King numbered his troops at the beach (Hdt. 7.59). In Thrace food was stored for his campaign at: Leuce Acte; in Tyrodiza near Perinthos; in Doriskos; and in Eion (Hdt. 7.25).

After the battle at Salamis Xerxes fled back to Asia Minor but Mardonios and his army wintered in Thessaly and Macedonia in preparation for a new clash with the Hellenes (Hdt. 8.126, 133). The Achaemenids were finally defeated at Plataea in 479. In addition to Greeks from Thessaly and Macedonians, Phrygians, Thracians, Mysians, and Paeonians were also summoned to Mardonios' army for this final combat (Hdt. 9.32).

The death of Mardonios in the battle at Plataea and the Persian failure at Mykale in 479 marked the beginning of the Achaemenid retreat from Europe. The joint Hellenic fleet was able to retrieve most of the cities on the Hellespont. The rest of coastal Thrace remained under Persian control. Only isolated examples of acts of Thracian aggression towards fleeing Persians are reported: a Persian named Oiobazos was sacrificed by the Apsinthian Thracians to their local god Pleistoros, in accordance with their custom (Hdt. 9.119). Herodotus relates in an anecdotal way how the Thracians who lived along the upper Strymon River captured from the Paeonians the sacred chariot of Zeus (i.e., of Ahura Mazda, the supreme Iranian deity) which Xerxes had left with them on his way to Hellas (Hdt. 8.115).

Eion was taken by the Greek fleet in 476, while Doriskos remained the last Achaemenid stronghold in Thrace. Persian power became less effective after the defeat of the Persians at Eurymedon, Pamphylia (Asia Minor) (ca. 466) and probably faded away somewhere in the 450s (Jordanov 2003). However, not all Persians evacuated Europe. There were a number of reasons for individuals to stay – previous grants of land, intermarriage, and refugee status, for example – which although not attested in Thrace are known from other regions.

21.2 The Achaemenid Impact

The Persian presence in the northern Aegean coast lasted approximately 40 years. It was in this period that we first hear of the Odrysian kingdom which was to become the most powerful Thracian polity in antiquity. The exact date of its foundation cannot be determined. Thucydides described King Teres (known as Teres I), father of Sitalkes, as the first ruler to unite a greater territory under Odrysian control (Thuc. 2.29.1–2). His first diplomatic interactions with the Skythians (Hdt. 4.80) can probably be dated in the second quarter of the fifth century (Archibald 1998, 103). Teres might have not been the very first Odrysian king, though, and the beginning of the kingdom can possibly be placed in the late sixth century. The scarce written evidence suggests that Darius I's Skythian expedition and his retreat from the northeastern Balkan lands stimulated Thracian-Skythian political activity.

To some extent the formation of political entities can be perceived from the earliest Thracian tribal coins (Yurukova 1992). They appear in the western part of the North Aegean, in the areas close to the gold and silver mines of Mt. Pangaion. Their dates coincide with the Persian presence in the region. The archaeological record shows that, while mines in the area had been used in earlier times, the minting of coins by the Greek cities (Thasos and Abdera among others) and Thracian tribes started in the late sixth century and continued up to the 460s (Balcer 1995, 166; Picard 2000). A date before 500 cannot be confirmed for any of the Thracian coinages (Balcer 1995, 162; Archibald 1998, 89–90). The names of the following Thracian tribes (some of them unattested in literary evidence) can be read on the legends of the coins: Derroni, Orreski, Ichnii, Edoni, Tynteni, Bisaltae. The name of the Edonian ruler Geta appeared as well. Both iconographical and metrological studies suggest that several Thracian tribes probably organized common minting and that something like a monetary union existed between the tribes in the Pangaion area and the Thasians (Picard 2000, 246).

Many Thracian tribal coins were found in hoards in different parts of the Achaemenid Empire (Asyut, Egypt; Elmalı, Lycia) which suggests an increased Persian quest for silver (Yurukova 1992, 11–26). Scholars usually explained them as an export of bullion or as tribute paid to the Achaemenid administration. Since there was no European satrapy, the latter explanation (despite the vague mention of European revenue in Herodotus) can only have a limited value. Like the gold Persian coins, the *darics* introduced by Darius I (Briant 2002, 409), these early Thracian coins were symbols of power and prestige. Their use in trade cannot be completely ruled out (Balcer 1995, 157, 168).

Persian rule over the northern Aegean intensified trade by opening it to the vast eastern markets. Not only Persians but Greeks were also now more active in the area. Around the Straits and to the north the Kyzikene stater that

equaled a *daric* was the international currency. Nearby cities minted their own coins following the Persian weight standard. To the west of them, up to the Strymon valley, the cities used the so-called Thraco-Macedonian standard, while those in the Chalcidice used the Euboean-Attic standard. The Thraco-Macedonian standard tried to combine Oriental and Greek weight measuring systems and coin denominations as the heavier coins were struck under eastern standards meant for larger amounts of precious metals (most recently: Delev 2012).

Although multiple factors account for the coinage in the region, it was not a mere coincidence that this early minting decreased rapidly after 478 and stopped somewhere in the 460s, after the Achaemenid withdrawal (Picard 2000). Few of the previously minted tribal coins continued after this time, including those of the Derroni, Oreski, and the Edonian King Getas; coins of the Bisaltae and King Mosses appeared now for the first time. Persian influence can be felt both directly and indirectly through the coinage and trade activities of the Ionian cities and their colonies.

Both the Persian presence in the Aegean and its retreat stimulated political consolidation and state formation among the Thracians, most prominently among the Odrysians, which can be followed in the early relations (and conflicts) between the Odrysians and the Skythians (Hdt. 4.80, 6.40) as well as with the Greeks in the Thracian Chersonese (Strabo 7.1.22). Local tribal coinage began in southwestern Thracian lands, as well as in Macedonia under Alexander I. On the Aegean coast Thracians and Greeks alike were open to the much larger market of the Empire and engaged in Persian military, engineering, and building activities; they also helped to provide supplies for the Persian army, navy, and strongholds. Thracians were also exposed to Achaemenid political and administrative practices and, more importantly, to the Persian way of displaying aristocratic status. It is traditionally accepted that the withdrawal of the Persians from the Aegean opened a political vacuum which was filled by the Thracian polities. The title *basileus* was struck for the first time on the Edonian coins and those of Mosses after the Persians returned to Asia.

Bulgarian scholarship claimed for a long time that Thracian (royal) names ending in *dokos*, *-tokos* were Hellenized forms of Iranian origin. The hypothesis cannot find satisfactory support either on linguistic or historical grounds (Mihailov 1977, 345; 1989, 60). Another element in Thracian personal names can be assigned to the Iranian languages: *-sades*, *-sadas*, as in Berisades, Medosades, Parysades, and others. Sadalas also belongs here as a derivative from *-sades* (Detschew 1976, 408–410). The exact cause and the mechanism through which these Iranian elements occurred in Thracian cannot be defined.

After the Graeco-Persian wars Anatolia remained Achaemenid territory and contacts between the European Thracians and the Persians continued,

especially in the Propontis area, while Thracians in Asia were among the various subjects of the Empire. Achaemenid influence was also diffused through the interactions with the east Greek poleis. This is partly reflected by the few hoards of Achaemenid regal and satrapal coins found in northeastern Bulgaria, as well as in Romania (at ancient Orgame, near the Danube Delta). Three hoards of *sigloi* contain coins of the “Royal-Archer Type.” Although possibly minted earlier they were treasured during the first half of the fourth century (Penchev 2005). The same is valid for the coins of the Persian satrap Tissaphernes, while those of the Persian governor of Rhodes are dated to the second half of the fourth century (Dzanev 2008). All of these coins are worn out, bear countermarks, and had been in circulation for a long time, probably in Anatolia. Their occurrence along the northeastern Black Sea coast should be seen as a result of trade with the Greek poleis in Asia Minor. The hypothesis that they were brought back by Thracian mercenaries (Dzanev 2008, 36) cannot find a convincing proof.

Literary evidence shows that there were indeed Thracian mercenaries engaged in the military conflicts in Anatolia, especially in the Propontis region during and after the Peloponnesian War. They were used by Greeks and Persians alike. In the late fifth century Alcibiades forced the Bithynians to side with him (Xen., Hell. 1.3.2–4). Xenophon tells us about Klearchos, a refugee from Sparta, who fought first against the Thracians, who lived beyond (north of) the Hellespont (Xen., Anab. 1.1.9, 3.4; 2.6.2, 5), but then used Thracian contingents to help Cyrus the Younger (Anab. 1.2.9, 5.13). The survivors of the Ten Thousand encountered the Mysians on their way back, who controlled large and rich cities in the land of the Persian king and were hostile to him (Anab. 2.5.13, 3.2.23–24). At the feast organized for the Greek soldiers by the Paphlagonians, Thracians and Mysians distinguished themselves in warriors’ dances. The Thracians sang the Sitalkas song (Anab. 6.1.2–6, 9–13).

According to Xenophon, Thrace in Asia lay from the Bosphoros to Heraklea Pontica and was inhabited by Thracians and Bithynians, or Thracian Bithynians (Xen., Anab. 6.2.18–19, 4.1–3; Bithynian Thrace: Xen., Hell. 3.2.2), who were unfriendly to the retreating Greek troops. The land was soon to become known as Bithynia and the Bithynian kingdom would be founded there.

The activities of these Thracian contingents probably facilitated the eastern, Achaemenid influences observed in Thrace. Diplomatic moves by the Odrysians (see Seuthes’ envoy to Xenophon: Anab. 7.1.5, 2.23–24) could have advanced contacts and exchange of goods, fashion, and ideas with Achaemenid Anatolia. Hieron Oros and Heraion Teichos on the northern shore of the Propontis were a sacred place and a fortified residence (and a treasury) respectively of the Odrysian king Kotys I (383–359) and later controlled by Seuthes II (Xen., Anab. 7.1.14; Dem. 23.104; Strabo 7 fr. 55). It was precisely in the fourth century that numerous elements of Achaemenid

influence were best displayed in Thrace.

21.3 Persian Influence

The Achaemenid presence in the northern Aegean for several decades and contacts with neighboring Anatolia afterwards accounted for the Persian affinities of some Thracian (mainly Odrysian) artifacts. Trade and exchange with the east Greek cities contributed to the process as well. However, the more profound reason for the Achaemenid influence upon Thrace was the similarity between Persian and Thracian society: a similar structure of a ranked society ruled by aristocrats. Thracian *paradynastes* resembled Persian satraps. Odrysian kings ruled from fortified residences not unlike the several capitals of the Achaemenids. The surroundings of the banqueting hall (*hestiatorion*) where Kotys I (383–359) and Philip II met (Theopompos: FGrHist 115 F 31) resembled the parks (*paradeisos*) of the Persian nobles (Xen., Anab. 1.2.7, 2.4.14; Cyr. 1.3.14). The otherwise curious passages in Herodotus about Thracian reverence for the road of Xerxes and their theft of the sacred chariot left by him with the Paeonians (see above) might reveal similar aristocratic values. The Great King proceeded behind this chariot drawn by eight white horses when he started his expedition at Sardis (Hdt. 7.40). White horses and chariots drawn by them are recurrently mentioned by ancient authors as emblematic for the Thracian kings (see King Rhesos in the Iliad 10.435–441). The road of Xerxes' army was probably considered a continuation of the Royal Road and thus sacred.

Ancient authors compared Thracian and Persian practices of gift exchange. In a discussion of Sitalkes' kingdom, Thucydides states that the tribute which was gathered by the Odrysian kings was supplemented by gifts in gold and silver, as well as plain and embroidered textiles and other objects. The latter were intended not only for the king but also for the *paradynastes* and other nobles (Thuc. 2.97.3–4). The ancient historian notes that unlike the Persian custom, the Thracians were more accustomed to receiving gifts than giving them, and this was especially true for the Odrysians. However, when Heracleides was soliciting Seuthes' Greek guests for gifts he said that "the greater the gifts you bestow upon this man, the greater the favors that you will receive at his hands" (Xen., Anab. 7.3.20), thus contradicting Thucydides' statement. The available evidence shows that Thracian gift exchange practice did not much differ from that of the Persians or Near Eastern royal protocol in general. Political complications and Athenian distrust of Sitalkes' military intentions during the Peloponnesian war might have been a reason for the historian's negative remark (Stronack and Zournatzki 2002).

Xenophon described the ceremony of presenting Seuthes with gifts: a white horse, a slave, clothes for his wife, a silver cup, and a rug (Xen., Anab. 7.3.26–27). Almost the same range of objects and animals (excepting the

camels) can be seen on the reliefs of the gift-bearers on the Apadana (Audience Hall) staircase in Persepolis. Textual evidence confirms this assortment of items offered (voluntarily and obligatorily) to the Great King (Briant 2002, 394–396).

Thus, it was easy for the Odrysian élite to borrow and emulate means of displaying status. Naturally, Persian influence can be best perceived in monuments and objects of Thracian/Odrysian aristocrats.

Objects of Near Eastern affinity were produced in Thrace before the coming of the Persians. Pre-Achaemenid Iranian traits were distinguished in some bronze objects like miniature cult axes and animal representations (dated eighth–seventh century) (Venedikov 1969; Venedikov and Gerassimov 1973). The animal protoma and figurines on axes and amulets, as well as the famous stag figurine from Sevlievo (seventh century) echo features of Iranian (Luristan, Ziwie) and Anatolian (Gordion) figurines. These examples were the local response of the so-called Animal Style which was popular from western China to Skythia.

Shallow bowls and omphalos phialae of the first millennium most probably originated in Assyria where earlier eastern types had been developed, and then spread to the west. Nevertheless, the earliest omphalos phialae discovered in Thrace find close parallels in the bronze bowls from Tumulus W and MM at Gordion (ninth century and ca. 744 respectively): a plain bronze omphalos phiale from Sofronievo, district of Vratsa, and three gold vessels from Daskal Atanassovo, district of Stara Zagora (both finds dated cautiously to the seventh or early sixth century). The best preserved from the latter is decorated with thin stylized pointed leaves (Lotosphiale), a type which would become more popular in Achaemenid times.

The more common use of phialae of precious metals in Thrace started at the time of the Persian presence in the North Aegean and its boom was in the fourth century. It is hard to claim these finds as Achaemenid imports in view of the fact that we know very little about metal production in the Persian heartland. Most of the Achaemenid metal vessels come from peripheral areas of the Empire. No direct Persian imports are known to date in Thrace. It seems better to speak about Achaemenizing or Persianizing objects.⁴

Two silver bowls, one with alternating almond-shaped lobes, the other with radial leaf-like grooves found in the Mushovitsa and Kukova Tumuli respectively from the Duvanli necropolis (near Plovdiv) (late sixth–early fifth century) (Filow 1934) are the earliest phialae of “Achaemenid” type (Marazov 1996, 11; Valeva 2006, 23–24). A more exquisite pattern of alternating almond lobes and lotuses became very popular in the fifth and fourth centuries (one of the earliest is the silver phiale from Grave 22 at Sindos, near Thessaloniki: late sixth century). Thracian responses to this Achaemenid decorative design can be seen on a number of vessels from the Rogozen

treasure (nos. 2, 42, 81) (Figures 21.1 and 21.2). One of the most luxurious Rogozen plates displays Persian/eastern features in its decoration with palmettes and four pairs of affronted lion-griffins (no. 97) (Marazov 1996, 30–32) (Figure 21.3).



Figure 21.1 Phiale No. 2 from the Rogozen Treasure.

Photo by Dimo Georgiev.



Figure 21.2 Phiale No. 42 from the Rogozen Treasure.

Photo by Nikolai Genov.



Figure 21.3 Phiale No. 97 from the Rogozen Treasure.

Photo by Nikolai Genov.

The best example of an Achaemenid-style vessel is the silver amphora-rhyton from the Kukova Tumulus at Duvanli (fifth century) (Filow 1934, 46–50) (Figure 21.4). It has two handles in the shape of griffins and a spout on one of them. Such a type of vessel is again represented on the Persepolis reliefs of the gift-bearers as well as in the wall-paintings of the Karaburun tomb, Lycia (early fifth century). The delegations whose members hold these vessels have however been identified as Lydians (or Syrians) and Armenians. The decoration of the body of the Thracian amphora with palmettes and flutes prompted scholars to assign its production to a Greek workshop. The gold amphora-rhyton from the Panagyurishte treasure whose handles are shaped as centaurs can be considered a Hellenized successor of the same type of vessel (Venedikov and Gerassimov 1973).



Figure 21.4 Silver-gilt amphora-rhyton from Kukuva Mogila, Duvanli.

Photo by Nikolai Genov.

Carinated bowls with everted rim are also among the gifts on the Persepolis reliefs. Such vessels are found in great numbers in Thrace. Cylindrical and biconical beakers also display Achaemenid affinities.

The horn-shaped rhyta with an animal forepart are considered an Iranian and Achaemenid type of vessel. Several examples in precious metals found in Bulgaria fall within this Iranian tradition, although often embellished in a Greek manner. Horizontal fluting of the horn is generally accepted to be an Iranian feature. The silver-gilt bull rhyton from the Borovo treasure (fourth century, near Ruse, northeastern Bulgaria) seems thus to be the closest to the Iranian pieces. The posture of the horse head of the other rhyton from the same treasure is modeled after Achaemenid examples, though its flutes are vertical (Ebbinghaus 1999, 390–391). A banqueting scene is represented on

the vase from the Borovo treasure where two male figures hold a horn rhyton and a phiale each, probably intended for a libation and/or drinking (Marazov 1998, 222–225). One of the rhyta features a sphinx head, the other that of a griffin. Quite similar scenes of feasts are depicted on the reliefs of the so-called Nereid Monument at Xanthos, Lycia, of the same period where seven animal-headed rhyta are shown.

Two fourth-century gold signet rings show horsemen with a horn rhyton: on one, a horseman is represented as holding a rhyton, while on the other he is presented with it by a female figure (from Brezovo, Plovdiv district and from Glozhene, Lovech district) (Marazov 1998, 180, nos. 110, 112). In both cases the rhyton is a symbol of power and élite status.

Xenophon described the use of drinking horns in the court of Seuthes (Anab. 7.3.24). The wine rhyta were offered to the guests in person. He also narrates about the feast held by the Paphlagonians for the Greek commanders when they, after sacrificing animals, reclined on couches and drank from horn cups popular in the country (Anab. 6.1.4).

The sets of drinking vessels that show Persian affinities are related to the custom of feasting on official and ritual occasions common to the Thracians and to the Achaemenids, as well as to other peoples. Late sixth–early fifth-century sympotic sets excavated at Sindos and Vergina demonstrate similar “Persianized” traits further west (Paspalas 2006, 100). Banqueting scenes, however, are much more often represented in Achaemenid Anatolia: on stelae, seals, wall-paintings, and elsewhere. But we cannot doubt the existence of the same practice in Thrace as it has been attested by both literary and archaeological evidence. As the Anatolian vessels of precious metals originate from areas close to both satrapal centers, Sardis and Daskyleion, they more readily emulate signs of power known from the Persian heartland, thus producing somewhat peculiar combinations (Miller 2007). No such examples are known from Thrace. Thracian vessels can be regarded as emulation of noble status in general but more so as reflecting an actual practice.

Anatolian monuments produced the modern term “Graeco-Persian” which can also be applied to a number of Thracian objects. Often the hybrid results show more “Greekness” than the items from Asia Minor, thus prompting scholars to argue for a minimal Persian influence in Thrace (Boardman 2011). It is usually assumed that Thracian metalware was produced in the Greek cities along the North Aegean coasts. Nevertheless, the Hellespontine area and northwestern Anatolia are the best candidates for the production of the majority of Thracian “Persianizing” vessels.

Thracian vessels attest to another practice shared with the Empire: gift exchange and tribute collection in objects of precious metals. Metrological studies of the vessels show that a certain weight standard was followed, thus suggesting a central control. We lack written evidence for how this functioned

in Thrace. However, the silver phialae inscribed with the names of Odrysian rulers Satokos, Kotys, Amatokos, and Kersebleptes found in northern Thracian lands imply princely gifts. Some of them bear names of cities in the Hellespontine area and might be considered as tribute or gifts to the Odrysian kings. The formula of the inscriptions on the silverware – “Kotys’/Kersebleptes’ (vessel), from Apros/Ergiske/Beos, etc.” (Mihailov 1989, 50) – parallels to some extent the inscriptions on Achaemenid metal vessels (Zournatzi 2000). The suspicion that silver vessels were also monetary instruments may gain further support by two inscriptions: on the handle of a silver jug and on the neck of a silver calyx their weight in “Alexandrian tetradrachms” (fourth century, from the Golyama Kosmatka Tumulus: Kitov 2005, 52).

Distant Achaemenid traits can be followed in some of the fifth–fourth-century gold and silver jewelry and pieces of personal adornment. Though highly Hellenized, bracelets with animal head finials replicate Near Eastern and Achaemenid types of jewelry (Tonkova 2000–2001).

Gold pectorals so often found in Thracian tumuli would become more popular in northern Greece and Macedonia only in the Hellenistic Age. This type of adornment is of an eastern origin. The best example of Achaemenid-influenced gold decoration is the pectoral from the Bashova Tumulus, Duvanli, late fifth century, with an image of a lion (Filow 1934, 67). The shoulder of the animal is rendered in a typical Persian manner as a loop. The recently discovered fifth-century large gold pectoral in Tumulus I near Chernozem (the Duvanli necropolis) (Kisyov 2005, 48–51), though Hellenized, falls within the eastern tradition (see a similar large piece from Dulboki, district of Stara Zagora, now in the Ashmolean Museum). Besides the Medusa image in the center, three lions and two deers are represented in repoussé around it. The lions stand on plinths which possibly suggest animal statues, or anyway resemble eastern/Anatolian animal representations. A fourth-century gold pectoral from Strelcha portrays a lion, a boar, and a sphinx. Boar hunting (see below) is also depicted on a silver-gilt belt from Lovets (North Central Bulgaria): the mirror arrangement of the scenes flanking the Tree of Life reflected Achaemenid patterns (Marazov 1998, 59, 175). The images of the archers behind the horsemen look “Persianized.”

Another way of displaying noble and royal status in Thrace and especially among the Odrysians was through the construction of stone-built tombs. Most are dated between the fifth and third centuries, the largest number of which fall within the fourth century. Anatolian Achaemenid features can be traced in some of them.

The sepulchral complex in the Ostrousha Mound, near the town of Shipka in Central Bulgaria, fourth century, was compared with Anatolian monuments since its discovery. The general silhouette of the monolithic chamber and the stereobate on which it was mounted recalls the Tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae

as well as the tomb at Buzbazar. Parallels can be drawn with other monuments in western Anatolia like the so-called Pyramid Tomb at Sardis, the Taş Kule rock-cut monument near Phocaea, and that at Antiphelos (Lycia) (Valeva 2005, 14–16; Vassileva 2010). The sepulchral monument, eventually a mausoleum, with a chamber raised high on steps (finally resembling a Greek temple), would become a popular type in Anatolia in the Hellenistic age. The Ostrousha Tomb displays a peculiar hybrid nature, which combines elements of Greek architecture and wall-painting style with an Achaemenid inspiration, thus producing a unique monument for a Thracian aristocrat.

The door frames of Thracian tombs find parallels in Ionian monuments of the period. A fragmentary painted relief of a lion with his head turned back, probably one of a pair, found in the Zhaba Mogila near Strelcha recalls the relief decoration of the fourth-century façades of sepulchral monuments in Lycia as well as in Daskyleion (Figure 21.5).



Figure 21.5 Lion relief from the Zhaba Mogila tumulus near Strelcha.

Photo by Lyubava Konova.

The few examples of wall-paintings in Thracian tombs can also offer material for comparisons with Achaemenid Anatolia. The visual program of the wall-paintings in the dome of the Alexandrovo tholos tomb (district of Haskovo,

southeastern Bulgaria) finds a compelling parallel in the scenes depicted on the sarcophagus from Çan (in the Troad) which was also found in a domed chamber. Both monuments date to the fourth century. Boar-hunt and stag-hunt scenes alternate on the ceiling of the Alexandrovo tomb, while the two hunting scenes on the Çan sarcophagus are divided by a tree. In both cases the wild boar is attacked by two dogs: one on his back, biting his neck, the other attacking his belly, a pattern well known from ancient hunting scenes. The boar hunt is a popular theme in minor arts both in Thrace and in Persia. A recently found example is the gold finger-ring from the Peychoiva Tumulus at Starosel portraying a horseman attacking a boar with a spear. The boars are already wounded in the Thracian examples, unlike the Persian representations where a spear is aimed at the boar's eye. The boar-hunt scenes find parallels on some of the "Graeco-Persian" stelae from northwestern Asia Minor (the closest one is the stele from Çavuşköy) (Vassileva 2010). Persian seals and finger-rings were probably the most convenient medium for transferring iconographic schemes and patterns. Though not yet found in Bulgaria they are known from Anatolia.

The similarities in the clothing of the riding hunters on the Çan sarcophagus and in the Alexandrovo tomb are even more obvious. All of them wear *anaxyrides* (trousers) and soft shoes of textile or leather. The Thracians are represented as wearing a "Median costume": two are shown wearing long-sleeved tunics. The saddle blanket is almost identical with the Persian horse cloth: it is decorated with a border of stepped half-merlons. The same type of saddle blanket can be seen on the horse painted in the main chamber of the Kazanluk tomb.

Although the Thracian paintings fall to a great extent within the Greek artistic tradition, the choice of the iconographic program betrays another taste. The type of society in both Thrace and Persia defined similar preferences in displaying a royal/noble status: hunting and battle scenes (both present in Alexandrovo and Çan) were a natural common option. Not surprisingly the closest parallels come from Anatolia under the Achaemenids. Both areas show hybrid monuments and objects that combine "Greekness" and "easternness" in an indigenous manner.

It is not always easy to detect the foreign elements that contributed to the Thracian artistic style of the fifth and fourth century. It appears as if an unconscious competition between Greek and Persian elements in the shaping of the Thracian objects and monuments (Boardman 1994, 184). Eastern influence reached Thrace both directly and indirectly through the eastern features already adopted by the Greeks. The fourth-century Achaemenid influence in Thrace was mainly Lydo-Persian or "Graeco-Persian," coming from Achaemenid Anatolia. Similar processes can be observed in Macedonia and Northern Greece (Paspalas 2006).

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Notes

- 1 All dates in this chapter are BCE.
- 2 Otherwise, *kurtaš* designated other occupations as well: craftsmen, stockbreeders, masons at Persepolis, etc.: Briant 2002, 429–435.
- 3 Neither the exact territories which these tribes inhabited, nor their ethnic identity can be securely confirmed.
- 4 Attempts to better classify Persian-style objects and label them as displaying, for example, “Court style,” “Odrysian court style” (Archibald 1998, 261), “Satrapal style” and “Perso-Barbarian” vs. “Graeco-Persian” (Rehm 2010b), cannot be productive in view of the various elements blended in them and the lack of information about the workshops that produced them.

Chapter 22

Thracian and Macedonian Kingship

William S. Greenwalt

22.1 Political Structures

Let us begin with a comparison of Thracian and Macedonian political structures, but before doing so it is useful to emphasize two things. First, we have no pertinent indigenous written source material for either Macedonia or Thrace through the Classical period. We do possess archaeological remains, coins, and a few inscriptions (although, through the Classical period, most of these last were erected by polis-dwelling Greeks for polis audiences). No native literary account, however, of Thracian or Macedonian customs exists. A second point to keep in mind is that no matter how small or primitive was the polis of the Archaic and/or the Classical period(s), there existed a group of peers who primarily represented their respective *oikoi* in public space and who dominated the political fields of their states. The principle of shared governance was ubiquitous in the polis – there were assemblies, councils, courts in which few knew tenancy for life. Where a polis magistrate held an extended term of office, there existed checks and balances preventing the domination of one individual or one faction. The offices held for specific terms had titles so as to distinguish the offices from the men temporarily occupying them. Where tyranny existed, it was generally considered an aberration and temporary. Similar principles held for Greek political federations. In short, the city-state was constituted of private *oikoi* each with its members subordinate to the local polity.

In contrast, Thrace and Macedonia were dominated by aristocratic elites under the shifting fortunes of kings legitimized by religion, military prowess, and gifts. Starting with Macedonia, although kings were practically limited in power by the vicissitudes of domestic and foreign affairs as well as by their individual talents and personalities, a growing scholarly consensus agrees that Argead monarchs knew no constitutional constraints and that they were particularly buoyed by associations with the divine (Spawforth 2007, 82–88; Greenwalt 2010, 2011). There were no assemblies of election or of constitutional deliberation during the Argead period and for some time after. We do have evidence that in times of extreme duress for which there were no precedents to guide action, some political deliberation occurred in (mostly vain) attempts to avert civil and military calamity (see esp. Curt. 10.5–10.8). These, however, occurred during periods of emergency when innovation attempted to forestall absolute chaos.

Let us contrast the domestic political structure of Macedon with the prevailing norms of the Archaic and Classical polis. This will not take long since throughout the Argead period there appear to have been no political institutions in Macedon which did not center on the ruling king and his house. All treaties were made in the monarch's name, all policy was determined by him (although disagreements could and did exist), all coinage was minted under his authority, all battles (except when the king could not be present) saw him as the general on the field, all justice was the king's and all foreign policy as well (Greenwalt 2010, 2011; Millett 2010). The status of favored royal servants was indicated by the designation of *Hetairos* ("Companion," naturally, of the king) status, and those so honored included non-Macedonians (at least eventually) as well as Macedonians. As a practical matter, no king could be everywhere at once, or personally oversee the lands which constituted even the smallest, most ancestral Argead realm. As a result, the king had at times to deputize Companions to dispense justice on his behalf, or lead armies when he was unavailable. Monarchs certainly consulted their *Hetairoi*, especially in the context of symposia (Hammond and Griffith 1979, 395–404; Borza 1983) but all decisions were theirs. The Companions gave the king reach, but the arm was his.

A few families had been honored for so long that their status and the rewards which had accrued for past loyalties could not be easily overlooked or their demotion easily accomplished, but as far as our sources reveal, the core of Macedon was the king's *oikos* through at least the Argead period (Hammond and Griffith 1979, 156; Greenwalt 2010, 159–163). So ensconced were the Argeads in their possession that kings did not even bear a title which designated their authority (although foreign, mostly Greek, literary sources refer to them as kings) – they were simply referred to by their given name, often with a patronymic. Neither did those who served at the king's whim have titles. There were no *Strategoï*, *Archons*, *Ephors*: those who constituted the realm's aristocracy were simply referred to as *Hetairoi*. Nor until the demise of the Argead house was there any threat of royal usurpation from any but a rival Argead – none but an Argead had the appropriate religious charisma (see below). As a result, the mechanics of Macedonian government could not have been more different from that of the polis. What mattered in Macedon was access to the king, and this allowed women as well as men to become political agents, the likes of which were alien to the polis (Carney 2000, 3–37). There was the echo of the distant past in all of this, and although the Greeks of the late Archaic and Classical periods may have had a sense of the Homeric quality of contemporary Macedon, in the historical present Macedonia was more like Thrace than it was like the Greece of the polis. In terms of Macedonian social stratification, there was the royal house led by the king. Under the king were his acknowledged Companions and a broader aristocracy who served at the king's discretion and manned his armies, and a mass of subjects who mostly served in a number of agricultural, or at least

servile, capacities and who could be called up for (and until the great Philip usually not very effective) military service upon need (Thuc. 2.99.6, 4.125.1; Polyæn. 4.10.1; Diod. 16.2.5).

Although our pertinent literary evidence for Thrace is as scanty as that for Macedon, what we do have suggests that Thracian kingdoms resembled what has been outlined above for Macedonia. Xenophon (Anab. 7.2.19f.) describes how Seuthes, son of Maesades, attempted to attract the author and his fellow generals to his cause in his effort to gain a kingdom which once was his father's. To win over Xenophon, Seuthes promised a fortified town (Bisanthe) on the coast, agricultural resources, the status of "Brother" (*adelphos*), a share of future gains, a daughter of Seuthes, and the promise that Seuthes would "buy" (marry) a daughter of Xenophon's, if he had one available (Anab. 7.2.38). Gifts of land, women, and movable wealth won loyalty and accrued what could be an unstable support, because (as in Macedon) continued loyalty demanded continued royal success. All of these offers were made from Seuthes without deliberation, even among those who could be numbered among his "court." Had things gone well between Seuthes and Xenophon, and if the latter had agreed to the offer as it stood, the Greek author/mercenary would have been very well set as an important aristocrat within Seuthes' realm. And we know that this offer was not unique, because not only were Xenophon's compatriots included in Seuthes' offer to some degree, so were others honored at other times, some of whom are mentioned below. An interesting component of Xenophon's account mentions the expectation that if anyone would have Seuthes as a friend and benefactor, one should initially lavish gifts upon the dynast (Anab. 7.3.18–20) – a necessity to engage in any court business at all (a custom corroborated in Thuc. 2.99.5, 2.101.5). Xenophon categorized the status offered to himself by Seuthes as one of a Brother ("from the same womb," although here, clearly an honorific), a status not so different from that which the Argeads designated *Hetairos* or, as some Greek sources refer to the status, *philos* (friend). Brother or not, when Xenophon temporarily fell afoul of Seuthes, it did not take the Thracian dynast long to demonstrate just how dysfunctional such political families could be. And here was the downside of Thraco-Macedonian political customs: the status quo was fleeting without the political infrastructure of polities such as existed in Greek poleis.

Thucydides (2.95–101) corroborates elements of Xenophon's account in passing when describing Sitalces' (son of Teres) massive invasion of parts of Macedon in 429/8. When citing Thracian revenues amassed by the successor of Sitalces (Seuthes, son of Sparadocus), Thucydides (2.97.3) cites an immense amount of gold, silver, and gifts. Following up, Thucydides then refers to the Thracian custom of gifts for "friendship" already noted, and contrasts this with the customs of the Persian kings, who are attested primarily to be the givers of gifts, not the recipients. Perhaps it is useful here to point

out that Plutarch (Alex. 15.2–3) recorded that on the eve of his Asian invasion and possessing relatively few resources, Alexander offered massive gifts of land and privileges to his Hetairoi, most of which seem to have been accepted. When great exertion and unquestioned loyalty were expected, Alexander fell back to the custom of gift distribution, temporarily begging himself in the process. Royal influence and favor were won regardless of the direction of distribution.

In his discussion of Sitalces' invasion, Thucydides numbers the Thracian horde at 150,000. Of these, the historian (2.98.3–4) commends the quality of the Thracian cavalry and those among the infantry whose home was in the highlands of Mount Rhodope, dismissing the rest of the multitude as being more formidable in its numbers than its quality. This lack of war-footing preparedness among most Thracians was also the case in Macedonia. Clearly in both Thrace and Macedonia, the majority of male adults of the realm did not regularly train for or serve in the army. The skills which most Thracians and Macedonians brought to the battlefield were those needed to provide for small-scale defense of local resources and/or for hunting (Xen., Anab. 7.4). Neither an efficient military organization throughout the population nor an ability to maintain an extended campaign was honed or expanded until the reigns of Philip and Alexander. The fact that greater military efficiency was not achieved earlier is likely to have been because warfare, like elite hunting, remained a heroic pursuit among northern kings and their nobilities: few leaders had the need, the power, or the willpower to tap the resources of the lower classes. It was not until the Illyrians butchered many of the Macedonian aristocracy and threatened the very existence of the Argead state that the surviving nobility (among others) would tolerate the diminishing of their heroic perquisites, which the empowering of a native infantry could be foreseen to mandate (Diod. 16.3–6; Greenwalt 2010, 160–161).

Returning to Thucydides, the historian records (2.102.6) that Sitalces' massive invasion was thwarted. His campaign lasted a mere 30 days. Power is one thing, staying power without the necessary commissary on campaign and/or the political infrastructure at home is quite another. In retreat, Thucydides (2.102.5) writes that Sitalces was convinced by his most important commander, Seuthes (son of Sparadocus) to withdraw. Seuthes in part advised as he did because he had been won over by Perdikkas II with the gifts of coin and a daughter: so once again, gifts. Corroborating the importance of gifts in the garnering of support is the saga of Iphicrates, the fourth-century Athenian turned mercenary commander extraordinaire, who also received land, money, and a royal daughter for his service in Thrace (Athen. 4.131a–c, citing Anaxandrides), and additional indications of gratitude in Macedonia from the wife and children of the deceased Amyntas III (Aes. 2.27–29; Nepos, Iph. 3.2). Thus, although the evidence is anecdotal for both Thrace and Macedonia, it is consistent insofar as the king's prerogatives and obligations

were concerned; the king's estate was the state, and gift-giving secured political access and loyalty.

How much the social and political similarities of Thrace and Macedonia were the result of one region borrowing from the other is a matter of debate. We can probably assume that their likenesses were more the result of geography, climate, natural resources, and historical development (or lack thereof in the sense that neither saw the spontaneous rise of cities) than in any borrowing. Their long association, peppered with intermarriages, wars, and the undoubted friendly exchanges which go unrecorded in our extant sources, seem to have reinforced the continuation of a way of life, which became more and more distanced from what was evolving in the Greek world further south during the Archaic and Classical periods.

Nevertheless, based upon the above argument that the royal states (the kingdom of Argead Macedonia and its Thracian counterparts) were the royal estates, it makes sense to think of the region's most valuable commodities as possessions of whichever monarch happened to be ruling any area at any given time. The two most coveted assets of both regions, especially by those who out of economic and/or military necessity had vital maritime concerns, were forest products and precious metals (Hammond 1972, 13–14; Borza 1982, 1–20; 1987, 32–52; Millett 2010, 472–504). Further down the list of desirable commodities were grain and military manpower but this list of commodities is not exhaustive. The value of the northern mines, especially those around Pangaeon, is well known. As for the value of forest products and their export, it is noteworthy that where we do have evidence, both foreign states and private exporters dealt with the ruling monarchs whose commodities they, by rights, were (Millett 2010, 472–474). If the Hellenistic evidence for domestic taxation has any bearing on Classical Macedonian practice, the revenues accrued from the sale of wood products and the export fees involved in their shipment must have constituted a significant percentage of royal revenue (Plut., Aemil. 28.6). We have no information on how domestic taxes (gifts?) were tallied or collected. Much of what came back to the region from abroad fed aristocratic incomes, swelled by gifts and the profits of war, and all supported an heroic ethos. Since much of what those elites owned came to be buried as a form of conspicuous consumption as opposed to being recirculated into the economy (see, e.g., Pandermalis 2004, esp. Kottaridi 2004, 139–147; Kottaridi and Walker 2011), economic motives of a modern sort per se do not appear to have been the primary object of the procurement of wealth, at least for those of great status. At least as important as the things which could be acquired through wealth were the honor and esteem which came with possession both in this life and the next.

22.2 Coin Evidence for the King as Hero

The earliest Thraco-Macedonian coins (see [Chapter 18](#)) attest to the metallurgical wealth of the region. The earliest of these coins were probably minted by Thracian tribes, but they clearly influenced the numismatic development of Macedonia. The most intriguing Thracian minting authority for our current purposes were the Bisaltai, whose territory lay to the west of the Strymon River, wedged between lands controlled by the Argeads and the Edonians. As such, the Bisaltai had access to the silver (and gold) mines on the slopes of Mount Dysoron and perhaps through trade and war to the more extensive sources around Mount Pangaeon. Minting probably after 480, the Bisaltai issued several denominations of interest (Head 1879, 140–142; Kraay 1976, 138–141; ANSSNG 1987, pl. 35). The first has a naked man with two spears behind a bridled horse on the obverse (with a legend denoting the Bisaltai, in the usual genitive) and a quadripartite incuse square on the reverse. The second depicts a hunter/warrior wearing a hat holding two spears and seated on a walking horse. It too had a quadripartite incuse square reverse. A third coin again has a mounted hunter/warrior with two spears on the obverse with a reverse similar but smaller than the first two. A fourth issue is usually attributed to the Bisaltai (although see Raymond 1953, 115 n. 14) and it depicts an obverse similar to the first here listed. Its reverse, however, bears the legend “Mosses” in the genitive around a quadripartite square.

These types probably appeared shortly before variations of these types began to grace the coins of the Argead Alexander I, who (also probably) for a period exploited the silver of Dysoron (Hammond and Griffith 1979, 104–115). Whichever state minted first, however, it provided the models for the other’s types. No Alexander coin bears an inscription referring to the “Macedonians” (in the manner of the Bisaltai) but many of his coins bear his name alone on the reverse around a quadripartite square (ANSSNG 1994, pls. 1, 2). Some also bear what appears to be the added element of a crested helmet within the reverse square, implying an innovation from earlier Bisaltic types. Smaller coins introduce a goat’s forefront on the reverse, tying them closely to versions of the Argead foundation myth. Alexander’s coins continue after the cessation of Bisaltic issues, so in all, the evidence suggests that his mint utilized types established by the Bisaltai, and thus, that he continued to issue types which originally had symbolic meaning for a Thracian tribe and from there, innovated. That the meaning was religious in origin, few would doubt, but it has been reasonably suggested (Hammond and Griffith 1979, 110, 156) that these types refer to some well-known (at the time) religious/mythological figure, and perhaps even that they portray Mosses and Alexander (after all, their names are used) posing as that religious/mythological figure.

The obverse types of Alexander and the Bisaltai bear a suspicious resemblance to a figure often reproduced throughout the north, but especially in Thrace, which is referred to in the scholarship as the “Hero,” “Rider,” or more fully the “Thracian Rider.” Before accepting the premise that these coins

were indeed intended to represent that figure, let us consider the numismatic tradition of the Argeads subsequent to Alexander I. By the middle of the fifth century large denominations (including large coins issued by Alexander I) were replaced by issues of lesser weight and more compatible with facilitating more moderate exchange. In Macedonia, two separate weight denominations of coins were minted through the reigns of Alexander I and Perdiccas II, perhaps for the purpose of distinct domestic and foreign distribution, or perhaps for the purpose of tying Macedonian coinage to two different foreign weight standards (Raymond 1953, 18–42). The heavier of these depict a rider with two spears, with the forefront of a lion on the reverse. The lighter issue has a horse on the obverse, with a helmet within an incuse square on the reverse.

With the reign of Archelaus, Perdiccas II's son and successor, we enter into a different world. Archelaus did not eschew the heroic types of his royal predecessors, but his issues have more the feel of contemporary Greek coins, numismatically paralleling a number of reforms introduced to modernize his kingdom (Borza 1993; Greenwalt 2003). Amid a very ambitious reign, Archelaus sought to redirect the financial focus of his kingdom in part by adopting a new weight standard in order to take advantage of expanding opportunities as Athens' power in the north was waning (Greenwalt 1994; 2007). Among the numismatic changes undertaken by Archelaus was a redrafting of his coin types. Two changes are particularly worth noting here: first, the head of a bearded Herakles type appears for the first time in an Argead context on some of his lesser coins (diobols, the reverse bore the forefront of a wolf devouring prey, with a Herakles club above); and second, on his largest issue (tetradrachms) he produced a version of the Rider considerably more animated than those of his predecessors. On the obverse of the second coin, the hunter/warrior retains his hat and two spears, but the horse which bears him prances instead of walks. On the reverse is depicted a kneeling goat and Archelaus' name in the genitive within an incuse square (Head 1879, 163; ANSSNG 1994, pl. 3). Archelaus' reign was active and ambitious, but he overreached, and alienated members of his *Hetairoi*. The result was that Archelaus was assassinated during a royal hunt (Arist., *Pol.* 1311b; Diod. 14.37.6; Carney 1983, 260–272; Greenwalt 1999, 181–183). Archelaus' assassination (399) led to a chaotic period of civil war and rapid successions until Amyntas III stabilized the realm (393).

Amyntas' accession owed nothing to Archelaus and in fact the two were from different branches of the Argead family. Amyntas' enthronement, however, came after a bitter intra-family squabble and his power was long overshadowed by foreign powers, especially the Illyrians who lay to his northwest (Greenwalt 1988; 2008). As such, Amyntas needed to tie his royal claim to an established Argead legitimacy, and he did so numismatically by referring to the coin types of Archelaus, the last king whose reign was

relatively stable. Amyntas issued two types of staters. The second of these chronologically, and by far the longer in mint and circulation, has a bearded Herakles type on the obverse (borrowing a motif first introduced by Archelaus), with a horse on the reverse. Of course, this type worked well as a reference to the mythological founder of the Argead dynasty, and to Herakles' status as a Hero/God. As such it was revived by subsequent kings. If Hammond is right about the issuing king being mixed into the mythological iconography (as again we think most probable) then this figure represents Amyntas in the guise of Herakles in much the same way as Philip II and Alexander III are thought to have subsequently represented themselves in the guise of their divine ancestor (Arr., *Anab.* 4.11.7). Moving on, even more striking than the Herakles series is a smaller issue which is firmly dated to the beginning of Amyntas' reign but apparently not minted for very long (Thompson, Morkholm, and Kraay 1973, no. 365). It depicts a riding hunter with a hat on the obverse, with a spear striking downward to the right. One known specimen has a caduceus brand on the haunch of the horse, a detail to which we will return (Head 1879, Amyntas III no. 14, 173). The object of his strike is portrayed on the reverse, where an animated lion is shown destroying another spear. The spears tie the two sides together and evoke the images which graced the coins of Alexander I, Perdikkas II, and Archelaus. Amyntas' type, however, appears to be more explicit about the purpose of the earlier riders: that is, it is probable that all of the earlier portrayals were intended to be understood as hunters, and that they were intended to be understood as pursuing worthy, even royal, prey. Since the earlier Macedonian issues paralleled those of the Bisaltai, by extension, we can assume a common meaning behind their types as well.

Amyntas' wrap-around composition is unique in Argead numismatics, and rare altogether throughout the coinages of the Mediterranean world (Greenwalt 1993). Nevertheless, a very similar Rider figure itself has been found in another Argead context. In the antechamber of Vergina's Tomb II, clearly a tomb of Philip, but which Philip is a matter of debate (Andronicos 1988, 188), there was found a pectoral upon which there is a band of Riders much like those found on Amyntas' coin. Andronicos has questioned the importance of the pectoral's iconography on the grounds that it was merely Thracian booty, but whatever the origin, the placement of an object bearing such an auspicious iconography should not be disregarded because the object was important to at least one of the two people buried in the tomb (Andronicos 1988, 189). Andronicos' pointing to a Thracian origin for the pectoral is probably right, and that is not insignificant. The Rider had a chthonic as well as a temporal symbolism in Thrace, so its placement in a tomb was significant *in situ*. Returning to Amyntas' two largest coins, at least two questions arise about their two primary motifs. The first is, why would Amyntas have issued such a strikingly innovative coin type as the Hunter/Lion at a time when he desperately needed to establish his legitimate

credentials if hunting was nothing but a pleasant pastime in Macedonia at the time? And second, why would Amyntas place such importance on the image of Herakles throughout his long, but largely undistinguished, reign?

22.3 Herodotus and the Foundation of the Argead Dynasty

Herodotus (8.137f.) records a much quoted foundation myth for the Argead dynasty involving three brothers, Gauanes, Aeropus, and Perdiccas (the youngest) who had been in the employ of a king of “Lebaea” somewhere in Macedonia to tend the royal livestock. While in the king’s employ, the queen baked the brothers their daily bread and noticed that the loaf prepared for Perdiccas always rose to double the expected size. This is the first miraculous element in Herodotus’ account of the foundation of the Argead dynasty. (In an interesting parallel Herodotus (6.57.1) notes that the Spartan kings enjoyed the prerogative of being served double portions when feasting.) A second miracle followed when the queen pointed out the marvel to her husband, who immediately suspected something was amiss and ordered the brothers to leave his realm. Before doing so, the brothers requested their pay. At this the king was seized with madness, denied their request, and pointed to where a sunbeam touched his hearth, telling them that was the only pay they would receive from him. Perdiccas accepted the payment understanding that the king’s hearth represented the kingdom as a whole, traced the extent of the sunlight upon the floor, and embraced the beam three times. Diodorus (22 fr. 12) cites that long after the demise of the Argead house and long after Pella had replaced Aegae as the primary residence of Macedonian kings, the latter continued to be referred to as “the hearth of the kingdom,” an obvious corroboration of the religious significance of the realm’s first Argead capital and the religious role of the royal hearth. After the brothers departed, a member of the king’s entourage suggested that Perdiccas’ action had meaning and the king, returned to his senses, dispatched riders after the trio. But then a third divine intervention saved the youths when a raging river cut off pursuit. Subsequently, their descendants (Argeads? Macedonians? Both?) sacrificed to the river as a savior, and the region to which the brothers had escaped, the “Garden of Midas,” became the springboard for the founding of Aegae and the conquest of the Argead kingdom. This myth obviously displays signs of divine favor and explains why Herodotus believed Perdiccas to be his dynasty’s founder (Greenwalt 1985; Ogden 2011), an acceptance which changed with time. It is clear that in the fifth century, however, to the Argeads themselves and to their subjects, Perdiccas and his family had been divinely selected and possessed an aura of sanctioned charisma. This would remain so until the Argeads were no more, regardless of who later generations credited with their dynasty’s foundation.

But let us turn to the role of the sun in this story. Two elements of the tale

suggest that the sun here was thought not to relate to Helios, or Apollo, or Ares as a solar deity, but rather to Dionysus. The first and more obvious involves the king's madness in symbolically turning his realm over to Perdiccas, who accepted the king's symbolic payment knowingly. As Euripides' *Bacchae* made clear, whom Dionysus would destroy became infatuated in such a way as to be the cause of his own destruction. Reinforcing the prediction that Perdiccas would one day become a king is the portent of the loaves which baked twice their expected size when they were intended for Perdiccas, obviously a sign of favor. Regarding the issue of such omens it has been noted (Burkert 1985, 61) that "fire miracles are spoken of only in the Dionysus cult." Of special interest is Burkert's citation of Pseudo-Aristotle (Mir. Ausc. 824a15–24), where it is recorded that there once existed a major temple of Dionysus amid the Thracian Crestoni (situated to the northeast of the traditional Argead kingdom, just to the west of the Strymon River) characterized by a fire oracle. If during a particular festival a sacrifice generated a large flame, it was thought that the harvest would be especially bountiful, but if no flame rose a disastrous harvest would result. Hence, at one level this Dionysus and his chosen symbolized worldly bounty. Herodotus (7.111.1–2) also notes a similar Dionysian oracle among the Bessi, presided over by a priestess (like the king's wife in the Perdiccas story) whose proclamations could be extremely difficult (like those of Apollo at Delphi) to decipher. That the Bessi's oracle was associated with a solar Dionysus is clear from its location on a mountaintop. The fact that both of these two oracles were Thracian is auspicious for us, especially after recognizing some religious/mythological connection with the numismatic evidence.

22.4 Ideology and Religion

Although scholars have rightfully been hesitant when interpreting art and anecdotal literary evidence, the growing archaeological bounty of northern Greece and Bulgaria has encouraged an increasing number to draw some conclusions about the belief systems of the peoples who left behind the growing corpus of material remains discovered across the region. These remains include some manifestly royal burials, thus a growing speculation has also begun about the royal ideology which is being manifested in the art and artifacts discovered (Venedikov 1997; Franks 2012), a speculation which is based on primary, not secondary, evidence. For example, in a recent monograph focusing on Vergina's Tomb II and especially its magnificent façade, Franks (2012, 113) summarizes the eclectic influences behind what this tomb, its decorations, and its contents have to offer: "while the Macedonian court may have drawn upon traditions that developed outside of the kingdom, those traditions seem to have contributed to the cohesive expression of a single conception of Macedonian kingship that is both distinctive and relatively stable for most of the Classical period." We agree

with this conclusion, and also with her conclusion that Thracians were among those outside influences. In another recent work it is argued (Niegorski 2005, 97–128) that one symbolic element of the Macedonian conception of kingship is represented by the object known both from texts and from jewelry as the “Herakles knot.” This argument points out that the knot was especially popularized by Alexander the Great as a symbol which linked him to his Heroic/Divine ancestor and which functioned as an apotropaic talisman becoming to his Heroic self. Once the knot was popularized through propaganda (Gordium comes to mind), it became an object of jewelry much sought by many in the generation after the great king largely for its religious symbolism. This argument has at its base the notion that Alexander possessed a special power, a special charisma which not only was Heroic, but in the end, God-like (Herakles was both). If the arguments about pre-Alexander Argead coins and the evidence from Herodotus can be trusted, this special charisma did not begin with Alexander, or even his father Philip.

It is true that the evidence underlining this argument is scattered, largely material as opposed to literary, and that no extant written source explicitly credits the Argeads with harboring such beliefs, but our ancient sources demonstrate no probing interest in Macedonia or its institutions per se (Greenwalt 1997; 2011) focusing almost exclusively on Philip and Alexander’s impact on the world around Macedonia. Even when Alexander proclaimed himself a god, little analysis explored why. This we must keep in mind when we examine the art, archaeology, and anecdotal literary evidence in order to reconstruct the mindset of Argead royal ideology.

Having briefly mentioned tombs, let us consider the chthonic. We have already noted that Amyntas III’s Hunter/Lion stater found in the British Museum bears a caduceus brand, a symbol which we think links that mounted figure to Hermes, a protector of boundaries, as important in death as in life. Leaving aside the magnificent portrayal of the Rape of Persephone in Vergina’s Tomb I (surely a religious commentary on the space in which it was found: Andronicos 1994), artistic references to Heroes, Horse Racing, and even the Hunt itself are frequently depicted in the tombs of Thrace and Macedonia in ways which are increasingly being recognized as religiously symbolic (Franks 2012). As such, the many grave goods which allude to feasting and drinking (references to Dionysus) and all things martial and/or hunt-related (references to the Hero) which are found in these tombs should be acknowledged within the religious contexts in which they are found. Although the particulars of life after death vary across Thrace and Macedonia, the rich grave goods discovered in Thracian and Macedonian tombs obviously were placed there in the belief that they would be enjoyed in the afterlife, a notion which is proven by the discovery of Orphic texts in the region (among the many exhibition catalogues and arguments which display this material and texts are Andronicos 1988 and 1994; Kottaridi and Walker 2011; Barr-Sharrar

2008; Betegh 2004; Fol and Marazov 1977; Franks 2012; Ginouvès 1994; Kottaridi 2004; Marazov 2011; Marazov 1997; Nicgorski 2005; Pandermalis 2004; Themeles and Touratsoglou 1997; Theodossiev 1998, 2000, and 2011). An expectation that the pleasures of life would continue into the afterlife in all of these environments is evident. None would continue, however, without the protection a Hero could render, a protection needed also to guarantee these pleasures for the living.

Herodotus (4.94–96) records an account which he doubts about Zalmoxis, an important figure among the Getae to whom mortals went when they “passed” (they did not really die) to a better place. Also according to Herodotus, Zalmoxis pulled off a con by constructing an underground chamber to which he withdrew for three years only to reemerge from “death.” Thus, he was able to convince his gullible disciples that immortality was true. This account is obviously a rationalization of beliefs we may broadly describe as Orphic, well known not just among the Getae but also throughout much of Thrace and Macedonia (for one example of Orphic devotion, see Plut., *Alex.* 2.5; Burkert 1985, 296–301; Betegh 2004). Zalmoxis, a mortal, supposedly knew death (at least the Getae believed so) and was resurrected which allowed him to deliver his message about the afterlife (like Orpheus). Insofar as Orpheus can be considered a Hero, Zalmoxis must also be characterized as one. Although skeptical, Herodotus obviously was exposed to a real belief because other historical figures from the region are known to have thought and acted along similar ideas.

Nicagoras of Zelea (a contemporary of Alexander) assumed the garb of Hermes (Clement *Alex.*, *Protr.* 4.54.3), and was believed by some to be a human representative of the god. Mentioned along with Nicagoras was Alexarchus (presumably the brother of Cassander and the founder of Uranopolis: *Athen.* 3.98d; Strabo 7 fr. 35; Pliny, *HN* 4.37), whose esoteric studies brought him to the point where he and others believed himself to have been metamorphosed into Helios. None of these men were kings, but the idea of a Hero who somehow functioned to guarantee life after death seems to have run wild throughout the north. And the fact that kings portrayed the Rider/Hero on their coins, among whose powers was exactly what these others claimed, strongly suggests that kings associated themselves with superior, if similar, powers in their respective realms.

In these anecdotes, we see both a chthonic and a solar guise associated with mortals, a combination not altogether unknown elsewhere throughout the northern Aegean and Anatolia. Not the least of the figures to combine these qualities was a Dionysus widely, if not universally, known throughout Thrace. Dionysus was a “mortal” immortal, who knew death, but who always returned to the world of the Sun and the living. Hottinott (1981, 102) has argued that the Rider/Hero had both chthonic and solar traits within Thrace, and further surmises that this figure was also “developed into a semi-divine clan or tribal

ancestor.” Rabadjiev (see [Chapter 29](#)) draws a nuanced distinction between Hero worship and the acceptance of Anthropodaimons among the Thracians, but this differentiation does not affect the current argument, for in either guise, the object of recognition was a protector of things living and dead.

Hottinott’s characterization appears to have been as true for Macedonia as it was for many in Thrace. But, perhaps in the case of Macedonia we can push the idea (like Hammond) a little further. When Herodotus was exposed to the Macedonian foundation myth, a Perdiccas was both the royal dynasty’s founder and its ruling king; when king Archelaus hosted Euripides and the latter wrote a play concerned with the dynasty’s origin, the new founder is hailed as “Archelaus”; when civil war embroiled the Argead state in the 390s and there was a rapid succession of monarchs, the less specific “Caranus” became the new founder (Greenwalt 1985; Ogden 2011). Caranus remained the name apportioned to the founder of the Argead line throughout the rest of that dynasty’s rule, although beginning with Archelaus and intensified by Amyntas III, Herakles (the mythological ancestor of all of the purported founders) came to the fore, not least in the area of numismatics. If we take the string of evidence at face value it seemed not only that the ruling monarch posed as the heroic tribal ancestor, but also that he gave his name to that dynastic ancestor, until Caranus, and even further back, Herakles, superseded all. We argue that the rapid turnover of kings in the 390s had the effect of creating an identity for the Macedonian “semi-divine clan or tribal ancestor” which was more generic and not as overtly associated with the moniker of the ruling king. One supposes that the coinages of Alexander I and Amyntas III which portray the Hero/Rider do so to indicate that the ruling monarch was the charismatic avatar of the tribal ancestor, as appears explicitly to have been the cases of Perdiccas and Archelaus (Hammond and Griffith 1979, 110, 156). We know of “Argead” rituals (Athen. 660a), but unfortunately know nothing about what they represented. Could our source be referring to esoteric rituals in which the king play-acted the role of a Hero, or was transformed into the Hero through some sort of association with Dionysus?

Fol and Marazov (1977) and Marazov (1997; 2011) have argued that Thracian kings at least at times associated themselves with the persona of the Hero through royal role-playing. Perhaps the most intriguing examples of such activity are reported unsympathetically by Theopompus (Athen. 12.531e–532a; Connor 1967), where he lambasts the double sacrilege of Kotys I for drunkenly reenacting a hierogamy with the Earth Mother, whom Theopompus identified as Athena. The inebriation here noted was certainly essential, linking Kotys in some way with Dionysus thus enabling a transcending of boundaries not usually breached by mortals (Connor 1967) for a ritual which Theopompus either misunderstands or loathes. Presumably, this union constituted a part of the king’s responsibilities in order to secure the Earth’s fertility, much in the same way as the Basileus and Basilissa conjoined in

Athens for fertility's sake under the eye of Dionysus during the Anthesteria festival (Burkert 1985, 108–109). In the case of Kotys, the king became the Hero whose potency brought prosperity, whereas in other cases it brought protection: the Hero (acted out by the king) was both progenitor and protector. We will look more at the protector below, but some of the iconographical representations of that duty came with an association with horses and chariots (Fol and Marazov 1977, 301f.; Piggott 1992, 18f.) As the light of the sun dispels darkness and immortality the fear of death, so did the Hero/Rider protect his own from chaos, evil, and death. The Hero/Rider was a kind of St. George, a kind of Hosios Demetrios.

Religious role-playing is evinced in the case of Alexander III. Ehippus (Athen. 537e–538b, although no more sympathetic than was Theopompus) attests that Alexander frequently donned the attire of Hermes (complete with caduceus, petasos, and sandals), Herakles, Artemis (!), and (Zeus) Ammon. One might be prone to interpret this passage as an example of idiosyncratic megalomania (Alexander certainly demonstrated more than a dollop of that characteristic) if it were not for all of the other evidence concerning Macedonia and Thrace, and for the fact that all of the deities mentioned by Ehippus find their counterparts in Herodotus' (5.7) summation of Thracian religiosity: two, Hermes and Artemis, are identical, while Ammon (Zeus) was the father of Herakles (a rival at times of Ares), who founded the Argead line and therefore as suitable a substitute as any, especially after Alexander's sojourn in Egypt.

Let us move on to the solar aspect of the Hero which appears as a part of his portfolio. Was it part of the Rider/Hero's "responsibility" to protect those under his authority from temporal enemies as well as from metaphysical ones? Marazov (2011, 132–189) has recently revisited both aspects of the royal heroic ideology through an examination of art. He has argued (138–146) that although "the local iconography of the Thracians was dominated by female deities," the figure of the hero maintained a prominent place, especially in the areas of trial, consecration, investiture, and marriage. Rabadjiev ([Chapter 29](#)) reminds us that there is little evidence for a pervasive and universal set of beliefs throughout Thrace in antiquity, perhaps in part because no one tribe or polity maintained the power to enforce any one system of beliefs for a long period of time (in this case, the Argead dynasty, ca. 650–ca. 310, differed). Rabadjiev's point, however, does not completely deflate Marazov's essential argument, which is that the Thracian Hero's essence could be demonstrated most thoroughly through an agon pitting him against enemies (symbolically, beasts) through which he emerged triumphant. The victory of this progenitor of his dynasty and his people resulted in order, the restitution of appropriate hierarchy, and all of the gifts which emerge therefrom.

Further, Marazov (2011, 147–151) sees in Thracian art the investiture of kings

through the agencies of gold and fire, and although he makes no overt mention of Herodotus' Argead foundation myth, that topos presents a Macedonian parallel to what can be seen in Thracian art. Implicit in Herodotus' account is that the new Argead authority would dispense the kind of justice to their subjects which had been denied the three brothers by the king whom they dispossessed. With Perdiccas a new order redeployed order and hierarchy. It is not a jump, therefore, to argue that within their kingdom Argead kings were always seen as the font of justice, and indeed we have evidence that they, either personally or through their designated deputies, dispensed right justice (or none at all, e.g., Plut., *Mor.* 178f–179c; *Dem.* 42.2–3). Thus, Argead justice (as is virtually all justice) was divinely sanctioned (and closely in sync with the Thracian evidence), so that when there was no justice, there was no true king (Adams 1986, 43–52). It is noteworthy that at least twice in Argead history, when dissidents challenged the justness of ruling kings, they did so in the context of a royal hunt, about which more will be said below. As far as justice was concerned, it seems that it was a responsibility of the king to remain true to its ideals and to protect his subject's interests not only by not violating them himself, but also by not letting anyone else do so. (Of course, as with all societies, kings did not always live up to this ideal as an absolute and sometimes vested interests were simply too big and important to fail: see, e.g., Plut., *Alex.* 10.4.)

As for the military defense of the realm, we have an abundance of historical evidence which proves that it was the king himself who was expected to lead armies against foreign opponents. It is, however, mythological references which provide the most potent evidence of the religious nature of the king's military role. Polyaeus (4.1) records that the mythological king Argaeus once turned back a raid of the Illyrian Taulantini through a religious ruse (Greenwalt 1987, 51–53). Justin, however (7.2.6–12), includes an even more poignant example: at a time when the mythological Aeropus was both an infant and a king, the Illyrians successfully launched an attack on Macedonia until the infant monarch was carried to the battlefield, at which point the Macedonians avenged their earlier defeats. Succinct and to the point, there is no better example of the power of royal charisma to protect those under its protection. Charisma was so easy, even the right baby could wallow in it.

22.5 The Royal Hunt as Ideology

Many scholars have written about hunts, royal hunts, royal hunts in art, the influence of Persia on Macedonian hunts, and royal hunts as the venues for assassination or attempted assassination (Hammond and Griffith 1979, 155–157; Carney 1983, 260–272; but see Franks 2012). This plethora of learned scholarship, however, has largely missed something important about Macedonian royal hunts since it has overlooked the evidence which the coins and Thracian parallels provide about the importance of these events to the

Macedonians themselves. As Franks has recently written, Amyntas III's depiction of the Rider/Hero Hunter makes moot all of the discussions about the influence of Persia on the Macedonian royal hunt and any dating of monuments based upon the notion that that influence returned home to Europe only after Alexander's invasion of Asia (Franks 2012, 117–118). Persian protocol almost certainly influenced Alexander and his Hellenistic successors, but the importance of the hunt to Macedonian kingship was elegantly demonstrated at the beginning of one of the more lackluster Argead reigns by the explicit portrayal of what had long been shown on earlier Macedonian and Thracian coins. Coin types, especially types minted at the beginning of a contested reign, do not portray mere whimsy or catalog pleasurable pastimes. They say something important to the psyche of the issuing authority, often with manifestly religious connotations. Hunts have in many times and places had such connotations (naturally allegorical) which demonstrate divinely sanctioned political legitimacy, and nowhere more than on Thracian and Macedonian coins. There are, however, two examples from literary texts which support this view: when Archelaus was judged to have unjustly changed his mind about the marriages of his daughters, the disappointed parties led the conspiracy which murdered him during a hunt (Arist., *Pol.* 1311b11–20, 30–34); similarly, when Alexander the Great's orientalizing policy was proving controversial among many traditionally minded Macedonians, he appears to have been challenged during a hunt (having his right to the first strike preempted), leading to the punishment of the perpetrator, which in turn spurred an assassination attempt over the issue of justice (Arr., *Anab.* 4.12.1–4.14.3). Regardless, coins circulated and thus functioned as propaganda in a way that no amount of grave deposits could, although in Thrace and Macedonia tombs and their contents reinforce what the coins convey.

The numismatic evidence suggests that the Macedonian Royal Hunt was widely associated with royal prerogatives and power, but an anecdote suggests that even when a hunt was not royal, it still had heroic implications: it is reported that Cassander was long denied the custom of reclining at meals because it took him an unnaturally long time to kill a boar without the use of a net (Hegesander = Athen. 1.18a). We argue that this right of manhood unfulfilled kept Cassander from demonstrating his emulation of a heroic quality, and the result of his failure was that he was accordingly treated as a child long after he should have fully joined the ranks of men. Cassander's humiliation (perhaps being a point against his father naming Cassander as his successor, although Adams 1974, 69–72) is an ample example of how truly steeped the Macedonians of his class were in notions of heroic actions lived daily. It seems, therefore, from an early date that the Macedonians in general and the Argeads in particular thought of the hunt as did many other societies: that is, as a metaphor of order over chaos, justice over hubris, good over evil, bounty over deprivation. What happened during hunts was both personal and

symbolic. What happened during Royal Hunts was personal and ideological.

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Guide to Further Reading

The fields of Thracian studies and Macedonian political institutions and customs are currently exploding thanks to the plethora of archaeological discoveries over the last generation, and just as important, their publication. Interpretations are undergoing significant shifts. Still important are Andronicos's first publications of Vergina's royal tombs (especially 1988), because the finds are so well illustrated and described, and Hatzopoulos (Macedonian Institutions Under the Kings, 2 vols., Athens, 1996) because of the extent of the evidence he covers and the stones he conveniently collects and publishes. Spawforth's (2007) contributions on the court of Alexander, collected with examinations of other ancient royal courts, provides a good insight as to why there is a contemporary shift away from an overly constitutional appreciation of Argead kingship. In terms of interpreting the meaning of mute objects, Nicgorski (2005) provides a worthwhile model, while Franks's (2012) monograph on Vergina's Tomb II and the reasons it was decorated the way it was will be hard to refute. For illustrations and scholarly opinion, the Ashmolean's exhibition catalogue (Kottaridi and Walker 2011) will be the standard in Macedonian studies in the near future, although it is matched by Marazov's (1997) contribution to the Thracian show which circulated almost 15 years ago. Marazov (2011) has amplified his earlier work on Thracian treasure. Despite his perhaps overreaching arguments about Thracian religion, his work still needs to be considered. Finally, Theodossiev's (2011) summary of the state of ancient Thracian studies as they stand now, must be a starting point for all who follow in the future.

Chapter 23

Thracians and Scythians: Tensions, Interactions and Osmosis

David Braund

23.1 Introductory Remarks: Framing Issues, Considering the Evidence

The purpose of this chapter is to set out the broad lines of interaction between Thrace and Thracians on the one hand and Scythia and Scythians on the other. The theme has only occasionally been tackled in this broad sense (Melyukova 1979 remains the classic study), though considerable attention has been paid to specific sub-regions (notably, Bruyako 2005), to specific phenomena (e.g., Thracian pottery in Tyras and Olbia: below) and occasional artefacts that might suggest wider inferences (e.g., Fialko 1995). This chapter seeks to embrace those concerns within a larger framework which may improve our understanding of particular details and instances, for example the story of Scythian King Scyles and his Thracian associations, with which we shall conclude this discussion. However, in constructing this model, we must be clear from the first that the attempt is beset with complexities and variations which need to be appreciated at least in general principle.

Since neither Thracians nor Scythians wrote accounts of their societies or histories independently of Classical tradition, we depend heavily upon Greek and Roman writers for most that we know about the relationships between their two cultures and sub-cultures (Getae, for example). In addition to written evidence, the remains of material culture also contribute, not only through the occasional discovery of (for example) an object of Thracian origin in Scythia, but also – more fundamentally – by confirming what we should have anticipated from the first, namely the shortcomings of that Classical literary tradition. After all, the very terms “Thracian” and “Scythian” are convenient and useful in many ways, but they are themselves the designations favored and apparently created by Classical culture. Accordingly, Herodotus is quite clear that “Scythians” was not the name which Scythians gave themselves (that was “Skolotoi” (4.6), but was that true of all Scythians?), any more, presumably, than the name favored by the Persians, for whom Scythians were among the pastoralist peoples termed “Sakai” (Hdt. 7.64). We have no reliable information about the Thracian name for Scythians, or about their sensitivity toward different groupings in Scythia. These different names are not only of some interest in their own right, but also, more importantly, constitute strong indications of gaps and slippages in perception between these various

cultures, which really matters when we find ourselves heavily reliant on Classical authorities for information about Thracians, Scythians, and the relationships between them. At the same time, and no less important, both Herodotus and the archaeological record demonstrate the many variations and sub-groupings that are cloaked by these great terms as they sweep between ethnicity and geography. Rather as with “Thrace” and “Thracians,” we know that the region which Classical culture termed “Scythia” was inhabited by groupings which were substantially different in terms of economy, social practices, and attitudes and – in various senses – ethnicity.

Herodotus, for example, is quite clear that agriculture played a significantly more important role among the “Scythians” in the western portion of Scythia (broadly, around and above the cities of Tyras and Olbia) than elsewhere in Scythia, where society and economy were heavily dominated by pastoralism. Moreover, he gives us some brief insight into the separate sense of identity among these latter pastoralists, whom he terms variously Free Scythians or Royal Scythians: these regarded their western brethren as inferiors, “their slaves” as he puts it (4.20). Meanwhile, as well as a range of non-Scythian or partially Scythian groupings in and around Scythia, Herodotus draws attention also to the establishment of settlements in the northern hinterland, which other (unnamed) Greeks had taken to be more or less Scythian (esp. 4.108–109). Pursuing his vision of Scythian pastoralism, Herodotus finds such settlement anomalous and perhaps for that reason perceives a Greek role in the creation of settlements deep in the Scythian interior. Modern excavation has shown that these large settlements of the hinterland were more numerous than Herodotus seems to have imagined, across the region from east to west and almost as far north as modern Kyiv. Of course, the preference for settlement or pastoralism, or some mixture thereof, was the product of local geographical and other circumstances across this enormous and varied territory. The development of large settlements was well suited in particular to the conditions of the so-called wooded steppe of the interior. However, modern scholarship has retained the name “Scythian” for the inhabitants of these settlements too, so that the scope of that designation has been extended even beyond the considerable extent of its usage in antiquity.

All this must be understood, if we are to have some sense of Thracian interaction with Scythia and Scythians. In particular, it must be stressed that Herodotus is consistently and substantially more concerned with nuance in his account of Thrace (further, Pavlopoulou 2006) and Scythia (Braund and Kryzhitskiy 2007) than is usual among the other Classical literary authorities upon whom we tend to rely. Notwithstanding the (in my view, misguided) habit of some scholars to hold his testimony under deep suspicion and to seek some signs of fraud in his text, there can be no doubt that his picture of the whole region is far more detailed, complex, and varied than the other texts that have come down to us from antiquity. Moreover, while there are

occasional inconcinnities, his account fits rather well with the evidence of archaeology. Accordingly, and by no means simply *faute de mieux*, we shall return to his text repeatedly and for different kinds of insight on the large issue of Thracian–Scythian interaction, although that was not a topic which was of particular interest to him in itself, except insofar as he was generally concerned with interactions between individuals and cultures (e.g., 3.38).

The history of Thracian–Scythian interactions oscillates between difference and similarity, alienation and affinity, conflict and cooperative coexistence. The gulf between the two ethnic and cultural groupings is regularly noted by Greek writers and is clear enough in the material record across the region when taken as a whole. There is much talk of boundaries by ancients and moderns alike, while the latter may well harbor thoughts too of modern political entities and controversies over identity and delimitation. The Danube bulks large in that kind of analysis, for the great river marks a strong line on the map, a firm division and an obstacle to passage from one side to the other. Even Herodotus, who was much impressed by the many great rivers of the Black Sea region, makes the Danube a critical boundary between Thrace and Scythia, so that its crossing by Darius marks the beginning and the end of his expedition in Scythia (cf. Melyukova 1979, 235). On that model, and reasonably enough, Thracians were readily characterized as a settled population to the south of the river, with an economy rooted in agriculture as distinct from the apparently rootless pastoralism which formed the basis of Scythian society and economy on the northern side of the Danube. On that model too, the scene is set for conflict between settled Thracians and roving Scythians. Indeed, our earliest literary instance of Scythian–Thracian interaction (given by Herodotus, inevitably: 4.97) is mention of Scythian incursion across the Danube and deep into Thrace (it is to be noted that the incursion is mentioned at all primarily because it entails Darius and also Athenian involvement in the Thracian Chersonese: routine conflicts between Thracians and Scythians were unlikely to be recorded for themselves).

However, that brief account of Scythians in Thrace serves to indicate also the inadequacies of the separation model. The Danube, like other rivers of the region, was certainly an obstacle, but it could be crossed, and not only in winters when the rivers froze. Crossing rivers was part of the nomadic lifestyle, as is evident across the region, for example even at the straits which nomads crossed between the eastern Crimea and the Taman peninsula (Vakhtina, Vinogradov, and Rogov 1980). Nomads knew how, when, and where to make such crossings. At the same time, rivers also provided opportunities for transport in different directions as well as fishing and piracy, so that this obstacle might also be a force for connectivity, not least between opposite banks. And, crucially, the terrain to the north and south of the Danube showed no sharp distinctions, particularly in its lower stretches, where the steppe of Scythia morphed into the so-called plain of Dobrudja as it

extended south of the river. For that reason we should not be surprised to find Arrian (Anab. 1.3–4), in the context of Alexander’s campaign against the Triballians and Getae, showing the lower Danube as a place of movement, trade, fishing, and indeed piracy, with Getan grain-fields and settlement on the northern side of the river (also Strabo 7.3.8, mentioning Ptolemy). We need not, however, retain Arrian’s suggestion of Getan amazement that Alexander had brought his forces across the river, cavalry and all, without a bridge (such as Darius had famously constructed). They may well have been stunned by his onslaught, but they knew that the river could be crossed.

23.2 Danubian Crossings

The Macedonian involvement in the western Black Sea and lower Danube, especially Philip’s diplomatic and military issues with the Scythian king Ateas, attracted the attention of Greek authors. Although the tradition is very fragmentary, it serves to demonstrate the complex interactions in the area between Scythians, Getans, and Greek cities. It was in this context that the city of Apollonia Pontica sought to represent the Scythian king to the Macedonian (Justin 9.2.1–2). And it was also in this context that Getic priests emerged from the city of Odessus to parley with Philip’s forces (in detail, Gardiner-Garden 1989). Meanwhile, a particularly interesting feature of these interactions was the reverence for Heracles shown by Philip (however strategically) and by Alexander with regard to the lower Danube (Justin 9.2.10–13, specifying the Danube “mouth”), for the great deity of the Macedonians was not only shared with the Greeks of the region but was also regarded as the ancestor of the Scythians themselves, as the early chapters of Herodotus’ fourth book illustrate, so that we glimpse the scope for constructive dealings between the key contenders here. Throughout the tradition on Ateas it remains quite clear that, however much there was talk of Scythian occupation of the steppe north of the Danube, their presence south of the river was considerable and sustained. Of course, Ateas appears as a rather special Scythian king, but we may wonder how far that image is the result of Philip’s engagement with him: while Strabo indicates (with a degree of cautious uncertainty, it may be noted) the extent of Ateas’ rule across the northern Black Sea, the geographer identifies the king as “the one who fought Philip, son of Amyntas” (Str. 7.3.18). While Idanthyrsus had gained a name through his association with Darius and the record of Herodotus, Ateas had found a reputation among Greeks through his link to Philip and, as it seems, the account of Theopompus. At any rate, Strabo is quite explicit that Scythian crossings of the Danube were regular and, moreover, that these crossings entailed not only raids but migration. We should note that, however much Ateas may have been important in that process, Strabo presents it as much broader than a matter of his reign among the Scythians. On Strabo’s view, it was in consequence of this Scythian significance south of the river that the

region of the Dobrudja gained the name “Little Scythia.” At the same time, however, the tradition on Ateas shows the potential for Scythian conflict with Thracians (notably, his war with the Triballians and the king of the Histriani) and with Greeks there (e.g., in Byzantium) as well as the potential also for cooperation of different kinds.

After Ateas, as the local information at our disposal increases through the Hellenistic period, we see also the activities of a range of rulers south of the Danube, whom the Greek communities of the coast here evidently regarded as Scythians. The honorific inscription inscribed ca. 200 BCE in the Greek city of Istros for a certain Agathocles indicates such activity, though it does not demonstrate Scythian presence south of the Danube as has sometimes been claimed. This inscription portrays the honorand bravely venturing to a Scythian ruler (a King Rhemaxos) in the interests of his fellow citizens as they lay under threat from the Thracian forces of a ruler named Zoltes (ISM I.15). As usual with this kind of text, of which we have several from the Hellenistic period, those who formulated its content made unhelpful assumptions about what its readers could be expected to know, so that there is unclarity about where Agathocles went. However, in my view, the most natural interpretation of the statement that he went “to Scythia and the Greek cities that lay under the command of King Rhemaxos” is that he crossed the Danube from the city of Istros close to its south and proceeded in the direction of Tyras and Olbia. His mission (about whose success the honorific inscription can only be positive) was evidently to bring the weight of Rhemaxos and his realm to bear upon the threatening Zoltes, so that the involvement of Scythians in the affairs of Thrace once more has the smack of conflict. Meanwhile, however, we should not suppose that the Istrians’ fleeting characterization of the Scythian king’s control of the unnamed Greek cities is wholly precise either juridically or practically: in Olbia, for example, the city’s relationship with the king may have been seen very differently.

If these honors for Agathocles show a Greek city reaching north of the Danube for Scythian (and Greek) help against Thracians, another honorific decree of much the same date (IG Bulg 1², 41) shows the presence and importance of a Scythian ruler and his significance for Greeks further south at Odessos, in what is now Bulgaria. For this inscription records the most lavish of public privileges bestowed upon a certain Hermeios, son of Asclepiodorus, who is identified as an Antiochene. Odessos bestows on him not only its own citizenship but a long list of rights and honors to boot. The text explains this generosity as Odessos’ response to Hermeios’ support during his evidently extended stay in the entourage of Kanitas, who is identified as “king of Scythians” and named prominently at the start of the inscription. Clearly enough, it was influence with Kanitas that had earned Hermeios his honors at Odessos. We should probably liken him to other influential Greeks at barbarian courts, for example Nymphodorus of Abdera at the court of

Sitalces, who had his sister as a wife (Thuc. 2.29). Hermeios' Antiochene origin, though possibly insignificant, at least encourages the thought that he may have served also Seleucid interests in the region. The main point for the present discussion, however, is that this Kanitas can hardly have been of such concern to Odessos, evidently over an extended period, if he were not ruling somewhere close to hand: this is not a king of Scythians roving north of the Danube nor one making an occasional incursion across it to the south. The inscription strongly suggests that these were Scythians in the region of Odessos, far to the south of the Danube. Fortunately, we have coins from the region which seem to support that inference, together with the coins of other rulers, whose iconography has usually been taken to indicate that they too were Scythians. Inevitably, the question of their ethnicity remains unclear and contested: for example, while Rostovtzeff (1934) long ago suggested that these rulers might better be called "Thraco-Scythians" than simply "Scythians," more recent studies of these coins prefer to identify them as "so-called Scythians" (further, Avram 2006, 69–70, with bibliography). In fact, we have seen that the whole concept of a Scythian ethnicity is fraught with complexities, so that we may reasonably include these rulers and their subjects among the many others who are in some sense "Scythians," but the more interesting question is the nature of their activities in the Dobrudja, including the degree of pastoralism in their economy and their relationships with others there and nearby, and their dealings (if any) with Scythians north of the Danube. On these matters we can only return to the sketchy remarks of Strabo, who presumably includes these rulers as well as Ateas within the significant presence of Scythians there. We may also observe the Greek look of the coins of these rulers, which again offers some encouragement to consider the potential for constructive interaction at least with the Greeks of the region, though we need to be much clearer about the dynamics and location of these rulers' coin-production. It is at least interesting to observe among the several types in the (bronze) coinage of Kanitas (including Zeus, Apollo, Demeter, and Kore) the presence of Heracles, clearly identified by his lion skin and, on the reverse, his bow and club (SNG XI 316).

The Scythian presence south of the Danube must be balanced with a Thracian presence north of the river. We have observed Getae there in Alexander's day, settled and raising grain. For Strabo the coastlands from the Danube delta north as far as the river and Greek city of Tyras were the Desert of the Getae (7.3.14), notable for its poverty and tracklessness beyond the great river. He seems to suggest also that it was here that Lysimachus was taken alive by Dromichaetes, king of the Getae, whose famous homily on poverty and imperialism only makes sense on the steppe beyond the river (7.3.8; cf. Diod. 21.12; further on Getic possessions above the Danube, Paus. 1.9 with Delev 2000, 393, who seems rather too skeptical; on poverty, cf. Ballesteros Pastor 2003). This was the kind of discourse more familiarly found among Scythians, proud and blunt in the strength of their poverty. However, as

Herodotus makes clear, simple pastoralism was not the whole story as one advanced round into Scythia. For he observes the agriculture practiced north and west of Olbia. These were the lands of the Alizones and the people he calls the Scythian Ploughmen, not least to distinguish them from the Royal Scythians east of Olbia, in whose outlook, he says, these agriculturalist Scythians were their inferiors, their slaves (Hdt. 4.20). The key point here is that, as we began to see with the Getan grain-fields of Alexander's day, there was scope for Thracian agriculturalists to maintain their lifestyles if they moved north of the Danube, the steppe notwithstanding. It is true that it is movement in the other direction that tends to catch the eye, but there are indications in the literary tradition and, especially, in the archaeological record that there was also significant movement northward from Thrace across the Danube and the Desert of the Getae beyond it.

Greek literary sources were not much concerned with Thracian migration into Scythia, but we should observe the occasional indications of that process in very different texts and contexts. At the level of myth, it is to be remembered that Amazons were regularly considered to be of Thracian ethnicity from Archaic times onward and so are often depicted in Thracian dress in Greek art (Bothmer 1957; cf. Sparkes 1997): while they are most familiar on the south coast of the Black Sea, east of Sinope, they were also located on the north coast, especially east of the Don (the ancient Tanais). Herodotus reports an origin-story of the Sauromatians there, according to which this people had been created by the union of some Scythian warriors with Amazons captured on the south coast and then washed up on the coast of Scythia (4.110). While the story is unhistorical, it is not without importance. First, it reminds us that passage north from the Danube was not the only way that Thracians, Thracian influence, and Thracian culture might find their way into Scythia. There were many more and less circuitous routes, especially by sea, that could bring Thrace into Scythia. Secondly, the myth offered some ideological basis for the Sauromatian settlement in Thrace that Strabo records, for Sauromatians might claim a Thracian origin through their Amazon forebears. Finally, rather as we saw that Heracles could bring together some of the peoples of the region, we should also observe that Ares, whose earthly home was located in Thrace by a strong Greek and Roman tradition, seems also to have been a deity of special significance and special cult among the Scythians. So much was appropriate, especially from a Classical perspective, in associations between these two peoples, whose fame resided especially in their capacity for war.

The Thracian reputation for military prowess no doubt made Thracian mercenaries all the more attractive, while their success in turn added further luster to the Thracian reputation. When Agathocles deployed mercenaries, as his inscription tells us, to protect the harvest at Istros, we should probably suppose that these men were Thracians of some kind. For we may be sure that Thracian mercenaries were as prized around the Black Sea as they were

elsewhere, as far afield as Athens and Egypt. Accordingly, there is much to be said for the hypothesis that the Spartocus who founded the Spartocid dynasty in the Crimean Bosphorus ca. 438 BCE was a Thracian mercenary (cf. Gaidukevich 1971, 65–69). He may have been employed by the dynasty he replaced: it suffices to recall the various schemes for settlement elsewhere in the Black Sea that Xenophon happens to mention among his Ten Thousand only some three decades after Thracian Spartocus took power in the Crimean Bosphorus. Nor is it a surprise to find Thracians serving in the forces of the Bosporan kingdom through the centuries that followed, whatever their particular status (e.g., CIRB 666, 2nd cent. AD). We should not underestimate the role of mercenaries in spreading Thracian culture and Thracian artefacts around the Black Sea region. Meanwhile, it was long ago noticed that the Spartocid dynasty tended to sport names which look distinctly Thracian (e.g., Minns 1913, 578). Less clear is the extent of continuing Bosporan engagement in the western Black Sea, but we should at least consider as a sign of such continuity the remarkable decision of the Bosporan King Eumelus to provide land to the Callatians whose revolt against Lysimachus (together with Thracians and Scythians) had failed (Diod. 20.25; Delev 2000).

While military and political ambitions and the hope of economic benefit brought Scythians into Thrace, much the same motives might bring Thracians and those who ruled there not only across the river northward, but also on at least to Olbia. For it was Olbia and the great river Bug (ancient Hypanis) that marked the limit of major Greek settlement around the coast in the face of the Scythian pastoralists who dominated on the Dnieper beyond and the Greeks and others who inhabited the Crimea, distant by land and with its own local dynamics. This tendency is visible not only in the ambitions of Lysimachus, but earlier too in the (rather poorly attested) campaign of Zopyrion, a Macedonian general who marched from Thrace as far as Olbia, which he failed to take by siege around 331 BCE (Delev 2000, 396; Karjaka 2008; the Zopyrion of SEG 42.711 is unlikely to be the Macedonian general). Despite the demanding steppe of Bessarabia between the Danube and the Tyras (Dniester), with its homonymous Greek city, there was much to attract imperialists, traders, and settlers to press on toward Olbia or north up the river networks into the interior, whose agricultural potential and relatively malleable Scythian populations we have observed in the text of Herodotus.

Especially important in the archaeology of this interior is the large settlement at Nemirov in the wooded steppe of the western Ukraine, where there has been considerable excavation. This settlement's origins evidently owe nothing significant to Greek influence, though the early east Greek pottery there (from ca. 650 BCE onward: Vakhtina 2007) and what seems to be a Greek graffito hint at its connections with the Greeks of the coast, especially at Olbia, which lay at the estuary of the River Bug on whose middle course the site was located (Braund 2008). The main interest of the site for the present discussion,

however, is its demonstrable participation in the broader Hallstatt culture to its west and south (especially Smirnova 2001). Once we consider Nemirov and the forest steppe in connection with Olbia and the other locations across the forest steppe and coastal zone, together with the less obvious movements across the steppe itself, we have a large picture of multiple connectivities in which Thrace bulks large. For that reason alone, there is a fundamental plausibility in the view that there was a significant Thracian element in the population of early Olbia. Certainly, the archaeological record includes handmade pottery of various colors (grey, brown, black) and shapes (largely pots) which have their parallels in Thrace as well as modern Hungary and Slovakia, that seems mostly to date from about the fifth century onward with a certain concentration in the Hellenistic period (Gavrilyuk 2010, with extensive bibliography; cf. Braund and Kryzhitskiy 2007). We should not be surprised, therefore, to find significant amounts of Thracian pottery around the estuary of the Dniester (in detail, Ochotnikov 2006).

This broad picture of cultural contact, interaction, and osmosis, beyond simple conflict, provides the context for a range of archaeological discoveries, which – if examined separately – may seem to offer no more than a scatter of peculiarities. Here we must acknowledge especially the pioneering work of Melyukova, who has done most to develop thinking on Thracian–Scythian interaction. As she pointed out, we have a good example of Thracian–Scythian osmosis as early as the mid-seventh century BCE at Tsarev Brod in northeastern Bulgaria, where a warrior’s burial combines elements of Scythian and Thracian culture (Melyukova 1965). For, while the manner of his burial and many of the grave goods find parallels in Scythia and not Thrace, there are also goods which would be odd in a Scythian burial and more at home in a Thracian one of this period (notably a Hallstatt vessel, an iron knife, and a gold diadem). Also interesting in this regard are several stone figures found in the Dobrudja which resemble very closely figures of this kind (baby) known from Scythia (Melyukova 1965, 37–38). They range in date from perhaps the sixth to the third centuries BCE, and presumably were used there – as in Scythia – to mark the burials of leading Scythians deposited in the area. Is this cultural osmosis? We should probably expect osmosis to occur in tandem with the movement of artefacts, so that only good contexts can really answer such questions from case to case. However, the broad pattern is indicated by a range of factors. Particularly notable in this regard is the observable development of a Thraco-Scythian form of what is more familiar as “Scythian animal style,” a term which – it must be understood – already embraces a range of types as we examine the different examples of the style across the great expanse from Siberia to the western Ukraine. As Melyukova observes, Thrace shows both items made in this style among Scythians and, more numerous and more interesting, a Thracian tendency to adapt that style to local tastes, with observable regional distinctions within Thrace itself. Among the Getae and Odrysians the adaptation seems to have

been at its height from the later fifth century to the mid-third century (Melyukova 1965, 38; 1979). The absence of local animal style in Bulgaria before the fifth century BCE confirms that we have cultural influences and osmosis at work here, though that is not to say that Scythian tradition somehow dominated its Thracian counterpart, as has been claimed (*pace* Melyukova 1965, 39; contrast Kitov 1980 and 1984).

Of particular interest here is the horse-gear (forehead-covers, cheek-pieces, bridle fittings, and so on) which is found extensively in Romania and Bulgaria as well as in Scythia, both in hoarded deposits and in burials. This exemplifies the development of a regional animal style, not least in silver and bronze, which problematizes the whole issue of the place(s) of its production. Accordingly, the regular designation as “Thracian” of horse-gear from the rich fourth century Scythian burial of Oguz in the Ukraine becomes at least awkward and questionable (further, Fialko 1995). And let us be clear that this is no minor matter, nor even part of a broader debate about the shared development of toreutics among Thracians and Scythians (e.g., Kitov 1980 and 1984). A finely equipped horse of fine quality was a strong statement and striking display of wealth and the power it implied. Indeed, in the case of pastoralists, the horse offered a rare chance to make public show of one’s standing and achievements, as Herodotus makes very explicit, even though he was evidently also struck by the fact that among Scythians horse-ownership was far more widespread across society than in the Greek world of the Aegean with which he was familiar (e.g., 4.46). For that reason the development of art and of taste in the matter of horse-gear was of a fundamental importance across the region that may not be immediately obvious to modern sensibilities.

At the same time, however, humble ceramics tend to indicate that the emergence of a shared animal style in the metalwork sported by the elite across the region, together with a shared taste in weaponry (and indeed in the use of arrow-money during the sixth and fifth centuries BCE: Melyukova 1965, 35) occurred amid important and persisting regional, economic, and ethnic distinctions. For, while Thracian pottery appears at Olbia, Scythian pottery among Thracians is largely confined to the eastern limits of what should probably be regarded as Getic territory, namely the area close to the west of the Dniester, from the sixth century BCE. Rather exceptional then is the Scythian pottery noted at Istros, which has been explained as a consequence of the Scythian pursuit of the withdrawing army of Darius and, possibly, a continued Scythian grip on the southern Danube in its aftermath (Melyukova 1965, 34). The archaeology seems to show us, therefore, that the elite Thracians and Scythians were more open to adaptation and acculturation than were their lesser brethren.

23.3 Scyles’ Story: Spanning Scythia and Thrace

With all this in mind, we turn finally to one of the fullest accounts of interaction between Scythians and Thracians (and indeed Greeks) across the region, namely the story of Scythian King Scyles, which entails both Thrace and Scythia, Istros and Olbia and more besides (Hdt. 4.78–80; Biondi 2011 gives detailed discussion of key issues and full bibliography). We shall see not only that the foregoing discussion accords with Scyles' story, but also that the interpretative model we have set out enriches our understanding of that tale, however we approach its historicity.

Herodotus offers the story of Scyles (as a diptych with that of Anacharsis) as an example of Scythian resistance to foreign culture and especially Greek culture at that. The Scythian response to Greek culture was of first importance to the author and his likely Greek audience, which goes some way to account for his claim that Scythians were especially resistant to the culture of the Greeks (cf. too Hdt. 4.102, where the Taurians are especially keen to capture Greeks, he claims). However, we should also entertain the possibility – even probability – that resistance to Greek culture was indeed a special issue for Scythians, of more intensity perhaps than any resistance to Thracian culture, with which, as we have seen, they seem to have had rather more immediately in common. Be that as it may, we must be clear from the first that Herodotus offers us two stories which do not really bear out his claim. For these stories show Scythian attitudes specifically to cultural influence in the sphere of religion, not in other matters, whether elite horse-gear or the more mundane matter of pottery. Moreover, they show not so much the resistance of Scythians as a whole to religious change, but instead indicate differences in attitudes within Scythian society, however atypical Scyles and Anacharsis may be considered. There is a strong flavor of myth about both these stories, which may already been paradigms of Scythian resistance before Herodotus deployed them in that way. While Anacharsis is clearly unhistorical, this story of the historical King Scyles shows so strong a resemblance to the tragic tale of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae* and elsewhere (Braund 2001) that its literal truth must be considered with considerable caution. What is very clear, however, is that both stories are rooted in Olbia, where Herodotus presumably found them. While Anacharsis' story is an aetiology for the city's cult of the Great Mother in its territory in Hylaea, the story of Scyles is explicitly located in the city itself, where much (though, crucially, not all) of the action takes place. Accordingly, we are dealing here not with the totality of Scythian resistance to (religious) innovation, but more specifically the local situation at Olbia and its environs, which in that sense, as we shall see, stretch as far as Thrace.

The bare outline of Scyles' tale is easily summarized. This Scythian king develops a taste for settled life in the Greek city of Olbia: there he builds a grand house – a palace, indeed, with griffins and the like to indicate Scythian taste – and takes a Greek wife and moves around the city in Greek dress. His

Scythian followers are kept outside the city walls and seem ignorant of their king's second life. In itself, none of this seems problematic in Herodotus' account, though we are not told how his Scythian followers may have reacted to this second life of their king. All becomes problematic when Scyles decides to have himself initiated in the mysteries of Dionysus, a god despised by the Scythians. Herodotus, who had been to Olbia and spoken with Scythians as well as Greeks there, stresses the tension between these peoples over Dionysus, whose cult is for him an indicator of Greekness in the region (cf. 4.108–109). Scyles ignores the divine warning given by lightning which strikes his Olbian palace, and persists with his initiation. He is seen in Bacchic celebration by some Scythians, whose report horrifies the Scythians outside the walls. In consequence, Scyles is beheaded.

There is a great deal to be said about the different aspects of this story (cf. Braund and Kryzhitskiy 2007), but here we are concerned with its relevance to Thracian–Scythian interaction. First, we should observe that Scyles' mother was a Greek woman from Istros: it is suggested that her influence has had its impact on Scyles' affinities. We must consider how his father, Scythian King Ariapeithes, had come to have such a wife, among others. And such considerations immediately raise the larger question of Ariapeithes' dealings with Istros in general. Although the chronology could be more precise, we have observed that the earlier fifth century shows a certain concentration of Scythian pottery at Istros, at much the time when Ariapeithes took an Istrian wife. Indeed, the family's associations do not stop there, for we must consider also the signet ring found some 10 km south of Istros which bears Scyles' name (in the genitive), unfortunately without any archaeological context. Its hoop is also inscribed with what seems to be an order to a certain Argotas (a Scythian prince, perhaps in Thrace) to come to Scyles, so that the ring is a kind of letter (Vinogradov 1980; Dubois 1996, 11–13). We have grounds to wonder, therefore, whether Ariapeithes' relations with Istros bore any similarities to Scyles' dealings with Olbia, as reported in the story told by Herodotus. Had Ariapeithes taken an Istrian wife in the way that Scyles took an Olbian one, that is as part of a relationship which included the king's palace in the city? As far as we are told, Scythians had no particular problem with that: the problem was specifically Dionysiac initiation, rather as in Anacharsis' story the problem is not the Scythian's concern with Greek culture but his introduction and celebration of the rites of the Great Mother, another (be it noted) mystery cult, outside the Olympian pantheon, which was evidently less problematic at least (cf. Hdt. 4.59). At least it is clear that Ariapeithes and (if we may make such an inference from the find-spot of the ring) Scyles reached across the Danube at least as far as Istros and perhaps even had a palace there.

Some confirmation of his significance around the coast west from Olbia is provided by the occasional discovery of what seems to be his coinage at the

mouth of the Dniester, at various points in the remains of the ancient city of Niconium on its east bank, across from the city of Tyras (Zaginaylo and Karyshkovskiy 1990 remains the fullest discussion). These are cast bronze coins which are known in three denominations and which show the influence of coining at Olbia in weight and perhaps also in the wheel on their reverse. On the obverse they bear an owl, which tends to suggest influence also from Athenian coinage, however mediated. Two further points are vital. First, these coins are unknown elsewhere and so, particularly in view of their distribution around the city, we must suppose that they were produced there, at least until we have some from another site. Secondly, some of these coins bear letters which indicate King Scyles, for, in addition to more abbreviated forms, we have on the obverse Σ KYΛ (with a further epsilon suggested, giving the genitive of Scyles) above and to the right of the owl (Figure 23.1). Only extreme skepticism can stand in the way of identifying this coinage, evidently produced in Niconium, as that of the King Scyles whose ring we have near Istros and whose tale we have in Herodotus, centered upon another Greek city. Accordingly, we have grounds for associating this Scythian king closely with three Greek cities which straddle the familiar dividing-line of the Danube: Olbia (Herodotus), Niconium (the coins), and Istros (the ring and his mother). Moreover, the chronology of these various elements, although rather flexible, is consistent enough and points to a reign in the early to middle part of the fifth century. We are left to consider the nature of his relationship with these cities, which remains elusive in detail and controversial among scholars, but we must at least note his evident standing at Olbia, where he can even have himself initiated (further, Biondi 2011 with bibliography). Also to be observed is the absence of any royal title, either on the ring or on the coins.

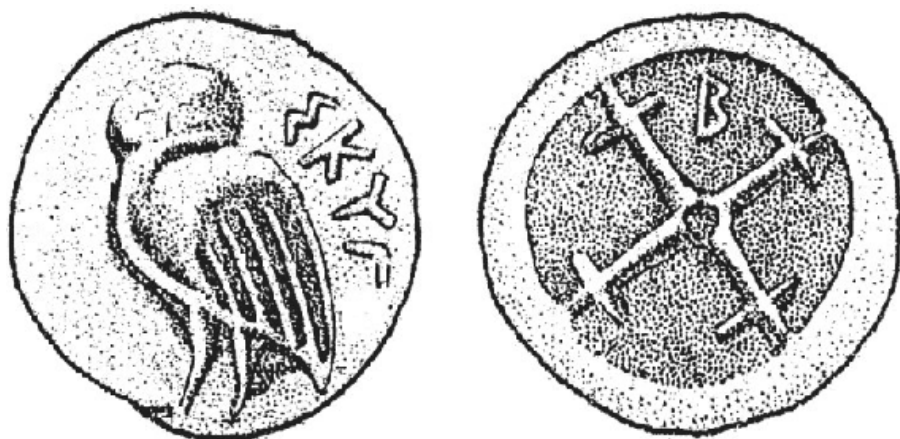


Figure 23.1 Bronze coin of Skyles (=Scyles) from Nikonion, Obv. Owl. SKYL, Rev. Stylized wheel shape.

Given the Istrian connection, it is no great surprise that Scyles took refuge with the Thracians when his own Scythians rose against him, alienated (as the

story goes) by his initiation in the cult of Dionysus (who was unproblematic in Thrace). And as the situation unfolds we start to appreciate the extent of Thracian–Scythian connections, at least at elite level. When Scyles fled to Thrace, he sought the help of the famous Odrysian king Sitalces, whose involvement helps date the story, for he died in 424 (Thuc. 4.101: his accession date is controversial). Scyles’ place in Scythia had fallen to a half-brother, Octamasades, who also had Thracian connections: his mother was a Thracian, daughter of Teres and so sister of Sitalces himself. Moreover, perhaps by virtue of that family link, another brother of Octamasades’ mother had already taken refuge from Sitalces with him in Scythia. As the two armies – the Thracians of Sitalces and the Scythians now under Octamasades – faced each other near the Danube, we are told that Sitalces, ever resourceful, offered to exchange Scyles for his unnamed brother, in refuge with the Scythians. Octamasades accepted. Sitalces took off his brother to an uncertain fate, but Octamasades killed Scyles on the spot, removing his head. Herodotus is clear that both Octamasades and Scyles were sons of Ariapeithes, brothers with different mothers. However, it is surely remarkable that both these wives of Ariapeithes came from south of the Danube, Istrian Greek and Odrysian Thracian respectively. We may well suspect that the king had many other wives too in consequence of energetic marital diplomacy, but it is worth observing that the two sons first to succeed had links with Thrace, even if we are in no position to assess the role of those links in their succession. We may wonder, further, how far Scyles’ interest in the cult of Dionysus may have arisen from his connections among the inhabitants of the western Black Sea. Be that as it may, the events of Scyles’ story can hardly have occurred much more than three decades or so (and quite possibly much less) before Herodotus visited Olbia and completed his *Histories*, which are usually thought to have appeared around the mid-420s, when Sitalces died. So it remains to square its mythic nature, especially its echoes of Pentheus, with the recent experience and memory of the inhabitants of Olbia, where Herodotus seems to have found the story. Here it is crucial to observe that events at Olbia had been rather undramatic, except for the lightning said to have struck Scyles’ palace. Scyles had already formed the habit of behaving like a citizen of the Greek city and (with the notable acquiescence of its inhabitants) he was now initiated. The drama followed outside the city, toward Thrace. And, crucially, it was the inference of those who told the story at Olbia that the uprising against Scyles and his decapitation (like Pentheus, at the hands of a relation) were the punishing consequence of the Scythian’s inappropriate initiation. While there were events at Olbia, it was the development of their significance that transformed them into a mythic tale. Finally on Scyles, we should also observe a certain congruence between this Scythian and Thracian Sitalces with regard to the Athenians. We have no clear idea of the reasons why Scyles’ coins bear an image – the owl – which is so redolent of Athens and its coinage, but we should consider whether he may have shared in the

Greek cities' developing relationship with the Athenians, most obvious in the subsequent expedition of Pericles ca. 437 BCE. There is also considerable uncertainty about Sitalces' relationship with Athens, although the king seems to have declared himself enthusiastically pro-Athenian in his later years, as the comedy of Aristophanes *Acharnians* has it in 425. Much therefore remains murky, but we may at least consider the real possibility that Sitalces and Scyles (and more broadly the Thracians and the Scythians) shared in diplomacy with the Athenians that was at least sometimes constructive and friendly. It is a pity that we know so little of Athenian ambitions in the Black Sea before the Peace of Callias ca. 450, whose reality is now broadly accepted and whose terms seem to suggest that the Athenian empire had no desire to stop at Byzantium. Accordingly, there may be another example of Thracian–Scythian interaction to be glimpsed here.

23.4 Conclusions

The story of Scyles as related by Herodotus (and however circulated in Olbia and among Scythians and Thracians) demonstrates and exemplifies the broad pattern that has been set out throughout this short study of a massive theme. On the one hand, we see distinct peoples and organizations, for example as Sitalces' forces line up against the Scythians. Much more striking, however, against that general background, are the various ways in which the two peoples and their elites are seen to interact, connect, and share a cultural interface. We see also in Scyles' story how the Greek cities on the coast of Thrace and Scythia played a significant role in the workings of relationships between the two peoples. It is not simply that these cities straddled the Danube, but also that they could collaborate – witness the honors for Autocles, ca. 300 BCE (SEG 49.1051; Ochotnikov 2006) – and were implicated with the interactions of the much greater non-Greek powers around them. At the same time, we have seen the limited reality of familiar distinctions between settled Thracians and nomadic Scythians and the limited role of the Danube too in dividing Thrace and Scythia. The interactions of the two were not simply matters of dynastic politics and the occasional shared taste for artefacts like horse-gear, but were more profoundly rooted in the economic matrix across the region, so that “Scythian” nomadism might flourish in the Dobrudja and “Thracian-style” agriculture and settlement can be traced from Thrace across the Danube as far as Olbia. All of that offers scant justification for the Greek tendency to run together Thracians and Scythians as much the same phenomenon, not least as irrational, ferocious, and rather vulgar barbarians (e.g., Plato, *Rep.* 435b), because such notions were the result of ignorance and chauvinism. However, Herodotus did not share those faults to any degree, so that we may take his ready movement from Scythians to Thracians to be an indication of the importance of interaction between the two peoples whom he had encountered not only as

slaves in the Aegean world, but as powerful forces in their own lands (e.g., Hdt. 4.74, where Thracian usage is suddenly brought into his account of Scythian hemp). Similarly, Thucydides, who quite without need breaks off his disquisition on the Odrysians to remark upon political disunity among the Scythians (Thuc. 2.97, a favorite theme: cf. Hdt. 4.81; Xen., Cyr. 1.1.4). As we have seen throughout this discussion, there were many reasons why Thracians might turn the thoughts of serious writers to Scythians and vice versa.

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Guide to Further Reading

Our ancient literary evidence on Thracian-Scythian relations is scattered across an array of sources, none of them produced by Scythians or Thracians, unless we make some exception for the late antique history of Jordanes (cf. Merrills 2005). On Greek images of Thracians and Scythians, especially in war, see further Lissarrague 1990; Sparkes 1997. On Herodotus and Greeks of the region, Braund and Kryzhitskiy 2007 is a convenient starting-point; Pavlopoulou 2006 offers valuable close discussion of Herodotus’ Thracian material. Thracian–Scythian relations as a whole are tackled in Melyukova 1965 and 1979; Androukh 1997; cf. Bruyako 2005, mostly concerned with early archaeology of the hinterlands. Metalwork has been a particular focus for discussions of the larger issue: Venedikov 1969; Ognenova-Marinova 1975; Kitov 1980 and 1984; Fialko 1995; Bülow, 1997; cf. Schneider and Zazoff 1994. Among historical-historiographical studies, see further Braund 2001 with Biondi 2011 (Scyles); Gardiner-Garden 1989 (Ateas); Delev 2000 (Lysimachus).

Chapter 24

Celts

Julij Emilov

24.1 Introduction¹

The Gauls, a vast horde of men, whether moved by shortage of land or hope of plunder, feeling assured that no people through which they would pass was their match in war, under the leadership of Brennus came into the country of the Dardanians. There strife broke out among them; about twenty thousand men, with Lonorius and Lutarius as their chiefs, seceded from Brennus and turned aside into Thrace. There, when they had penetrated as far as Byzantium, contending against those who resisted and imposing tribute upon those who sought peace, they occupied for a considerable time the coast of the Propontis, holding as tributaries the cities of the district.

(Livy 38.16.1–3; E. T. Sage translation)

Attempts to understand the mechanisms and extent of interactions between communities of Late Iron Age temperate Europe, labeled in the ancient sources as “Gauls,” “Celts,” or “Galatians,”² in opposition to their “Thracian” contemporaries in the eastern Balkans, is largely influenced by available narratives of the “Celtic expansion” in southeastern Europe and the early third-century military campaigns. While references to these rather dramatic events by Classical Mediterranean authors, like the passage of Livy cited above, continue to be important sources about contacts between “Celts” and “Thracians,” efforts to incorporate available archaeological data into the discussion provide some insights into cultural phenomena, which remained outside the scope of the ancient literary sources. Finding a correlation between historical and archaeological evidence is confined to topics such as mobility, migration, tribute, and warfare, which are constituent components of contact between individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds. Other issues, including the impact of these encounters on social transformations in the eastern Balkans during the last third of the first millennium, as well as changes in expressions of status and identity in the region, are reflected only in archaeological sources. By combining different types of evidence, the aim of the present overview is to examine interaction between the Late Iron Age communities of “Celts” and “Thracians” and to emphasize the factors that contributed to both the diffusion of cultural traits or La Tène³ cultural templates in Hellenistic Thrace and their modifications in the local milieu.

24.2 Early Long-Range Contacts Along the Danube – Visible and Invisible

Ongoing debates about a supposed “Thracian” link in the transmission of “Oriental” or “Orientalizing” elements to early “Celtic” art (Frey 1984, 262–263; 2004; Bouzek 1997, 253–254; 2012; Megaw and Megaw 2002, 488–491; Pare 2012) not only provide a fruitful area for speculation about the nature of the earliest interactions, but also highlight the problems of the visibility of long-distance contacts between the Iron Age inhabitants of transalpine Europe and communities in southeastern Europe. Almost seven decades ago P. Jacobsthal (1944, 37) considered the bronze neck ring from Glauberg, a chance find from the vicinity of a hillfort (“Fürstensitz”) (Baitinger, Hansen, and Pare 2012) in the present-day German province of Hessen, as “possibly the work of an artisan from the East, employed by the Celts.” The search for the origin of various stylistic influences and “eastern connections” goes hand in hand with ideas about the “agency of the Thracian metalwork” (Powell 1971, 184–193; Fischer 1983; Luschey 1983), which envision the movement of craftsmen and diffusion of social practices among elite groups (Frey 2000, 54), as well as the transfer of symbols among different cultural entities, as early as the fifth century (Kossack 2000; Bouzek 2002; 2005, 94; Venclová 2002, 74–75 on art style as “import”). Identifying external “intellectual” impulses and tracing back the artistic idea or image to its original source, however, has proved to be a difficult task, due to the considerable degree of transformation of exogenous elements into a “new and original La Tène product” (Venclová 2002, 75; Megaw and Megaw 2011).

Leaving aside the misty field of symbolism, trait chasing, and the stylistic origins of the elusive “Celtic” art, it is still not possible to substantiate the concept of direct, long-range interrelations between Thrace and temperate Europe in the middle of the first millennium. “Exotic” finds of a Baltic amber loop in a grave under Mushovitsa tumulus near Duvanli and amber beads from tumulus N1 near Etropole are considered to be the latest indications of a complex system of contacts and exchange linking northern and southern Europe during the Early Iron Age (Ivanova and Kuleff 2009; Gergova 2009). Distribution of the highly praised, fossilized resin to Thrace along the “amber routes” and the relevant model of “down-the-line trade” (Bouzek 1997, 122–123), however, do not require extended traffic networks, caravan merchants, or large-scale commercial enterprises. There is no clear evidence for the constant and reciprocal flow of raw materials and commodities by overland or river transport across the Danubian regions at the beginning of the Late Iron Age. Rather, a relay system of exchange (Bouzek 2009) between a large number of small political and economic entities may have been predominant.

Recently C. Pare (2012) has suggested that trade of horses and horse-gear from the “Thraco-Scythian Lower Danube” to northeastern Adriatic regions

and across the Alps brought the images of raptors, monsters, gryphons, and other fantastic beasts to the west. The idea merits attention, since horses as mounts or chariot teams were most likely valued not only by the Hellenes, Scythians, or Thracians. The scientific basis, however, for this “trade” mechanism among the elites and more conclusive evidence for the arrival of superior “eastern” breeds in the lands of the “Celts” are awaited.

In contrast to this rather dim picture of archaeologically “invisible” early long-range contacts, there is the short remark of Herodotus, often cited and frequently discussed, which describes the Danube river as the counterpart of the Nile in his Egyptian logos (2.33.3–4) (Pearson 1934; Frey 1985, 232; Archibald 2006, 122; Sonnabend 2007, 82–83; Dan 2011). “Conventional” geographic knowledge and sketchy description of the major European river, which “rises among the Celts ... cutting Europe across in the middle ... as far as the Black Sea” is followed by Herodotus’ statement that the Danube “flows through inhabited land, familiar to many” (2.34.1). Using the framework of a symmetrical geographic image, the note refers to remote regions of the oikoumene (Keyser 2011), although it remains unknown what kind of knowledge about the lands along the Danube and their inhabitants was actually available to the Hellenic public of Herodotus in the late fifth century (Tomaschitz 2002, 16–17; Randsborg 1993, 117 on the ethnocentric perspective of the ancient Greek authors and Herodotus as the sole early exception). The short remark, however, gives the impression that these regions were not terra incognita, as assumed in recent scholarship (Cunliffe 2010, 19). Without additional textual or archaeological evidence in hand on the matter of early relations between the “western” and the “northern barbarian” communities, it seems reasonable to summarize the present stage of research on the topic with the still valid “verdict” that “such links may indeed have existed, but remain unproven” (Megaw and Megaw 2002, 491).

24.3 Galli ad portas

The earliest meeting of “Celts” and “Thracians” attested in the ancient sources (Arr., *Anab.* 1.4.6–8; Str. 7.3.8) was occasioned by a Celtic delegation to Alexander the Great, while he was on campaign against the Triballoi in 335 (Tomaschitz 2002, 94–95; Theodossiev 2005, 85–86; Rustoiu 2012, 357–378). The event took place in northwestern Thrace during negotiations between the king of the Macedonians and the local Triballian ruler, Syrmos. The Celtic envoys “said that they had come to seek Alexander’s friendship” and Alexander “gave pledges of amity, and received pledges from them in return” (Arr., *Anab.* 1.4.6–7). In the context of diplomatic exchange, one can understand the popular anecdote about the “Celtic” fear “that the sky would some time or other fall down upon them” (Arr., *Anab.* 1.4.8) as a formula specific to oath, like that preserved in the legendary Irish tale of Táin Bó Cúailnge (Freeman 1996, 44). The emissaries presented themselves as coming

from “the Celts, who dwelt near the Ionian gulf” (Adriatic Sea); this problematic phrase has generated a long academic debate about the question of which “Celts” (and from which side of the Adriatic) had sent this delegation to the lands of the Triballoi (Tomaschitz 2002, 94; Guštin 2005, 52). Analysis of the earliest La Tène artifacts in Transylvania (Rustoiu 2008, 67–80; 2011, 163) suggests the presence of Senones from Picenum in Italy among the groups of “Celtic colonists” who settled in the inner Carpathian zone during the second half of the fourth century; such evidence provides hints for understanding the “Adriatic” connection of these Celtic envoys. A solid gold neck ring from Gorni Tsibar (Montana region) in northwestern Bulgaria, the most easterly find of a gold object decorated in original La Tène design, has been dated by form and function to the third quarter of the fourth century and belongs to the same time, when Alexander met the Celtic envoys (Megaw 2004; Theodossiev 2005, 86–87; Emilov 2007, 58). Due to a lack of reliable information about the circumstances of its discovery, it is unclear if the precious neck ring came from a grave or “ritual” deposit in an area close to the southern bank of the Danube river. O.-H. Frey and M. Szabó (1991, 481) interpret this sole example of golden torque from ancient Thrace, decorated in fourth-century “Celtic” Waldalgesheim style, as booty taken after the “victory” of Cassander over Celtic warriors (for this battle, see below). N. Theodossiev (2005, 86) suggests a more peaceful explanation, considering the item as a “political gift of some Gaulish chieftain to [an] unnamed Triballian aristocrat” during early interactions between the newcomers and local communities. It is doubtful, however, if the gender attribution of this high-status marker should be limited only to males, especially bearing in mind the close parallels between the Gorni Tsibar neck ring and those adornments discovered in the last resting place of “the Celtic princess” in Waldalgesheim near Mainz in Germany (Joachim 1995, 60–73), as well as those of a noble female of the “Celtic” Senones, buried in grave N2 in Santa Paulina Filotrano near Ancona (Landolfi 2000, with regional overview). The precious neck ring is part of the personal ornament; when included in a set of jewelry, it became an element of a female costume, reserved for “Celtic” ladies. Despite the fact that we deal here with a single item and not a full set, it seems plausible that the precious neck ring reached the lower Danube region as a result of exogamy and most likely reflects a high-status woman moving from the communities of Transylvanian Celts to their southern neighbors (Emilov 2007, 58–59; Arnold 2005 and Rustoiu 2011 on individual mobility as social practice).

A decade after the first diplomatic exchanges, another Celtic embassy “from the Galatians, inhabiting the regions close to the tribes in Thrace” (Diod. 17.113.2) arrived in Babylon to meet the Macedonian king. The court of Alexander was impressed by their *skeue* (Arr., Anab. 7.15.4), a term which refers to the overall appearance, clothes, jewelry, and armament of the Celtic diplomats. Despite some doubts about the historicity of the event among

modern scholars (Strobel 1996, 166; Tomaschitz 2002, 95), it is reasonable to suppose that these representatives came from the same “Celtic” group as the previous delegation (Alessandri 1997, 149). The envoys took a long journey to Mesopotamia to confirm the earlier agreement, but it may have been during this mission that the wealth of Anatolia and of the regions around the Straits was noted for future reference (Rankin 1996, 85–86; Cunliffe 1997, 79–80).

Two unusual sources of information for historic events, Seneca the Younger (QNat. 3.11.3) and Pliny the Elder (HN 31.53, citing Theophr. F.216, Fortenbaugh et al.), contain vague mention of conflict between “Celtic” warrior bands and the Macedonian king Cassander “somewhere in Haemus” (Werner 1996, 284; Tomaschitz 2002, 95; Emilov 2005b). These passages focus on the origin of terrestrial waters after deforestation, which was caused by “Gauls” who had retreated to the mountain and chopped down trees for the construction of a wooden palisade when “blockaded” by the Macedonian king. Additional evidence about a similar conflict is supplied by Pausanias (10.19.5), who observes that “the Celts conducted their first foreign expedition under the leadership of Cambaules” and advanced “as far as Thrace”; the raid was abandoned because the “barbarians” “lost heart,” “realizing that they were too few in number to be a match for the Greeks.” Establishing a chronology for these encounters presents considerable difficulties (Delev 2003, 107–108; Boteva 2010, 43). The mention of Hellenic adversaries against the “Celtic” raiders favors treating these texts from different sources as related to a single event in Thrace during the last decade of the fourth or the very beginning of the third century (Nankov 2009, 273–274).

In a broader historical context, the military expedition led by Cambaules and the episode with the Macedonian army in Haemo can presumably be linked to the “Celtic” settlement in the lands of the tribal groups (in present-day eastern Serbia), designated by the Mediterranean writers as Autariatae (Theodossiev 2000, 83; Džino 2007, 56 on “Illyrian” Autariatae as a description of “common regional cultural habitus”). The arrival of “Celtic” warrior groups at the borders of the Triballian territories not only changed the landscape of power in the Danubian regions to the west of the Iron Gates (Blečić-Kavur and Kavur 2010), but also triggered a chain of events leading to Cassander’s involvement in affairs at the northern fringes of the Hellenistic world (Nankov 2009, 273). Thus, the available information about the earliest “Celtic” military expedition into Thrace and the preceding embassies seems to describe the individual initiatives of different “Celtic” communities, rather than a long-term strategy for conquest with a corresponding shift from diplomacy to warfare.

Until the time of the Great expedition to Delphi in the early 270s, nothing more is heard of the “Celts” near Thrace; and so for the period before the battle at Corupedion, one may imagine an entire network of agreements

among various polities in the central and eastern Balkans arranged by Cassander and Lysimachus, which managed to neutralize the danger of “Celtic” incursions (Lund 1992, 49–50). Other plausible explanations include the conclusion of agreements with neighboring “Celtic” groups that were not recorded in ancient authors (Rustoiu 2012, 362, on the duration of treaties for a period of one generation). Political turmoil after the end of Lysimachus’ kingdom left the communities on the “northern frontier” exposed to “barbarian” invasions and the “Celts” would soon exploit the situation (Nachtergaele 1977, 129–137; Hannestad 1993, 15–16; Strobel 1996, 186–226).

Almost every attempt in modern scholarship to reconstruct in detail the number, sequence, and routes of the “Celtic” invasions in ancient Thrace starts with a point about the “sad state of the extant sources” (Delev 2003; Tomaschitz 2007; Dimitrov 2010; Boteva 2010). Allowing for the potential inaccuracies and biases of the ancient authors, as clearly demonstrated by Livy’s commentary on the motives of the “Gauls” and their “vast horde” (38.16.1, quoted at the outset of this chapter), the course of the main events and the several waves of “Celtic” incursions into Thrace linked to different stages of their Great expedition are tolerably clear. According to Pausanias (10.19.7), one Cerethrius was chosen “to be leader against the Thracians and the tribe of the Triballoi” as part of the initial triple action, while Brennus and Acichorius invaded Paeonia and “Celtic” forces under Bolgios headed against Macedonia (Nachtergaele 1977, 129; Tomaschitz 2002, 112–114). Since Cerethrius is not mentioned again in the ancient written sources, it seems that the planned offensive on the eastern front during the “first wave” in 280 either failed or remained at preparation stage (Theodossiev 2005, 86; Boteva 2010, 44).

In the spring or early summer of 279, while Brennus led a “second wave” of raiders toward the wealth of the cities in Greece and “even greater treasures in sanctuaries, including votive offerings and coined silver and gold” (Paus. 10.19.8), two chiefs, Lonorius and Lutarius, broke away from Brennus’ force with 20,000 people and “turned aside into Thrace” (Liv. 38.16.1–3). The event took place in Dardania, a rally territory for the “Celtic” advance to Macedonia and Greece during the Delphi campaign. The initial aim of Lonorius and Lutarius’ march was the core of the former realm of Lysimachus located around the Straits, but, after a brief conflict with Byzantion, the group comprised by the tribes of the Tectosages, Tolostobogii, and Trocmi managed to cross into Asia Minor (Mitchell 1993, 14–16; Strobel 1996, 243–247; Darbyshire, Mitchell, and Vardar 2000; Tomaschitz 2002, 146–152; Mitchell 2003).

The “third wave” of invasion concerns the army of 15,000 infantry and 3000 horsemen, which, according to Justin (25.1.2–3), was left by Brennus “to defend the borders of their country.” Unlike the “second wave” of tribal

migration (under Lónorius and Lutarius), the force of the “border guards” was a warrior contingent on a raiding campaign, defeating on its way to the Straits the tribes of “Getae and Triballoi.” Justin’s description (25.1–2) of a meeting and subsequent conflict between these “Gauls” and Antigonos Gonatas in 278 or 277 is a mixture of Hellenistic royal propaganda and Roman stereotypes about “barbarians,” but reveals in essence the unsuccessful attempt of a pretender to the Macedonian throne to hire the “Celtic” warrior group as mercenaries and his considerable difficulties in gaining victory over them (commentaries on the passages with different suggestions in Tomaschitz 2002, 124; Boteva 2010, 40–42).

In the aftermath of the Great expedition another group of “Celts” under the leadership of Komontorios arrived in the environs of Byzantion and established a royal residence (basileion) near Tylis (Polyb. 4.46.1–3). In the absence of Polybios’ references to “Celtic” relations with Byzantion (4.45.9–4.46.6), one could argue that these raids were just a series of military initiatives in search of booty with only limited and short-term impact on the communities in Thrace. The kingdom of the Thracian Galatians survived until the late third century, however, when Kavarnos, the last ruler of the royal residence near Tylis, intervened in the Byzantine-Rhodian conflict (Werner 1996, 288–289). Even if their polity was not a dominant political factor in the region (Lazarov 2010), it still played a significant role in the highly fragmented political landscape of southern Thrace after the battle of Corupedion and the multiple “Celtic” raids in the eastern Balkans (Delev 2003; Dimitrov 2010; Emilov 2010).

In spite of the multiple efforts by modern scholars to search for the “capital” of the Thracian Galatians, the precise location of Tylis remains an enigma. Polybios’ descriptions of events around Byzantion imply that Tylis was not far away from the polis, but the available archaeological data neither provide support, nor refute such interpretation of the ancient text (see Vagalinski 2010 about the ongoing debate and suggested “solutions”).

A coin hoard, hidden during the time of the Great expedition in front of the gate of the settlement center (identified as emporion Pistiros on the upper Hebros river) near Vetren, Pazardzhik region, as well as objects of La Tène type discovered in the layers of destruction there, point to the “Celtic” warriors as responsible for considerable damage on the site (Bouzek 2005; 2007). Repairs of fortification walls on Krakra hill (nowadays part of Pernik in Sofia region) on the upper Strymon River and signs of looting and fire near Vetren mark the direction of the “Celtic expansion” toward the eastern Balkans and the Straits, but the majority of “urban” centers in southern Thrace, like Seuthopolis, Philippopolis, and Kabyle, as well as settlements in the lands of the Getai (in present-day northeastern Bulgaria and southern Romania), survived this turbulent period in the early 270s.

24.4 Politics of “Danegeld” in Hellenistic Thrace

The term “Danegeld” usually refers to tax in Anglo-Norman times, raised to pay tribute to Viking raiders in order to save a land from being ravaged. As it describes a specific measure of Medieval royal policy in times of crisis (Mason 2003), it may seem anachronistic to use the word “Danegeld” to describe an aspect of the relationship between Thracian Galatians on the one hand and the various communities in inland Thrace or Hellenic poleis of the west Pontic or Propontic coastal zones during the Hellenistic period on the other; but the purpose of these communities’ regular payments of silver objects and coins to the Thracian Galatians, namely, to prevent plunder, was quite similar to the later practice, named after the Northern raiders.

“Danegeld” deserves attention as a general model of relation between ports of trade and their “barbaric” neighbors, especially considering the testimony of Polybius (4.46.3–4) on the tax paid by Byzantion and the experience of this polis with the groups under the command of Komontorios and Kavaros (Walbank 1957, 497–500; Champion 2004, 248; Dimitrov 2010, 56).

The politics of threatening the plundering of the chora in order to receive tribute was certainly not a “Galatian” invention. An empty plot in the interior of the fortified area of Byzantion, called “to Thrakion” (“the Thracian [plot]”: Xen., *Hell.* 1.3.20), was probably intended to shelter the city’s extramural population in case of attack (Loukopoulou and Łaitar 2004, 918; Gabrielsen 2007, 319). Polybius notes on several occasions that the citizens suffered from pressure exerted by Thracian dynasts prior to the arrival of the Galatians, who “conquered the Thracians” and “placed the Byzantines in extreme danger” (4.45.10, 4.46.2). Bearing in mind Livy’s testimony about tribal groups with two chiefs “imposing tribute upon those who sought peace” (38.16.3), it is also questionable if the “Celts, being barbarians” understood the potential profit of taxation only after their Great expedition into the Balkans (Bouzek 2007, 250). In contrast to the agricultural aspects of the “Celtic colonization” in the middle Danubian and Carpathian regions (Rustoiu 2012), the aim of the Galatian communities, including both the warrior groups and tribal segments that penetrated into ancient Thrace or Anatolia, was not “to settle, but money and booty, which could be acquired in a variety of ways” (Mitchell 1993, 15).

Monetized economies in the Hellenistic world and its northern periphery provided particular, long-term opportunities for acquiring wealth by mercenary service or by demanding protection money from rulers or wealthy cities. M. Price (1991, 174, 176) has suggested that the numerous issues of Alexander-type tetradrachms minted in west Pontic poleis were paid as tribute to Thracian Galatians. Due to this practice of “Danegeld,” H. D. Rankin (1996, 189) has even defined the kingdom of Tylis as “a powerful establishment of bandits” with “its history of extortion coming to an end in 212 BCE when the Thracians revolted from its domination and destroyed it”; the pro-Byzantine narrative of Polybius in the fourth book of his *Histories*

certainly leaves such an impression. A short fragment from the eighth book, however, presents a eulogy of the last ruler of Tylis, Kavaros, who is portrayed as a prominent leader who “took care that the merchants sailing to Pontos” enjoyed “greater security” and “at the same time rendered great services to the Byzantines” (Polyb. 8.22). His efforts to put an end to the war between the polis and Prusias, king of Bithynia, were probably followed by Kavaros’ formal recognition by Byzantion as its *euergetes* (“benefactor”) (Gabrielsen 2007, 317). These events mark a final point in the transformation of the politics of “Danegeld” from synonym of presumed “barbarian predatory economy” to a technique of political pressure for the pursuit of economic gain within a contemporary Hellenistic framework.

The city of Kabyle, Jambol region, situated at the great bend of the river Tonzos, provides some additional hints about relations between Kavaros and the politics in inland Thrace. Fragments of two inscriptions on marble slabs, containing the letter combination Gala, plausibly restored as Gala[tai] (“Galatians”), could indicate a treaty concerned in part about tribute that the polis owed to the Thracian Galatians (Emilov 2005a; Dimitrov 2010, 56; Handzhiyska and Lozanov 2010, 267). Payments are illustrated by an issue of Alexander-type tetradrachms with the legend *basileos Kavarou* (“of/belonging to King Kavaros”), struck in Kabyle during the third quarter of the third century (Draganov 1993). Taking into account the continuing uncertainty about the extent of the territory controlled by Tylis, as well as ongoing discussion about the simultaneous existence of a number of other political entities in the interior of southern Thrace (latest reviews in Delev 2003; Dimitrov 2010), it remains conjectural whether Kabyle was directly integrated into Kavaros’ realm (Lazarov 2010, 110–111) or managed to keep its relative independence. On analogy with the case of Byzantion, it is reasonable to argue that the last ruler of Tylis acted as a “benefactor” of Kabyle rather than conqueror, who “took advantage of the mint of the town to issue his tetradrachms” and “to legitimate [his] political status” (Manov 2010, 95).

Available archaeological data also does not support scenarios of immediate Celtic control in Kabyle (Handzhiyska and Lozanov 2010). A single find of a double-spring loop, belonging to a La Tène brooch, was discovered close to the left shoulder of the individual buried in tumulus no. 7 near the urban center. The item is exceptional in this local context and indicates the extraordinary use of dress accessories with La Tène design among the citizens or the elite of a polis in inland Thrace at a time when their selection of adornments followed contemporary Hellenistic fashion (Emilov 2005a).

This brief episode of Kabyle’s tributary relationship with Thracian Galatians deserves attention as an additional example of the adaptation of “Danegeld” politics to economic realities in Hellenistic Thrace. Evidence for payments, including high value silver coins with the name of the last ruler of Tylis, fits well into the scheme described by Polybius about Byzantion. The

historiographer mentions that initially the Thracian Galatians received “Danegeld” in precious gifts (Polyb. 4.46.3), but later required annual payments in gold coins. During the time of Kavaros, the tribute from Byzantion reached a peak of 80 talents (Tomaschitz 2002, 139–141; Dimitrov 2010, 56). Silver tetradrachms with basileos Kauarou correspond to the economic potential of the polis at the great bend of ancient Tonzos and reflect a short period of Kavaros’ influence over the urban center. One may only speculate whether the fragmentation of the inscriptions with Gala[taï (?)] was due to *damnatio memoriae* after the end of the Tyliš kingdom.

24.5 Hellenization and Latenization – Two Sides of the Same Coin?

Our consideration of the subject of “Danegeld” within the context of relationships between newcomers and various communities in Thrace now leads us to one of the most controversial topics in modern scholarship about “Thracian Galatians,” namely, the nature of “Celtic” “penetration” or “settlement” in the region (Domaradzki 1980; Theodossiev 2005; 2011, 15; Anastassov 2011). Ancient written sources leave no room for doubt about “Celtic” presence and activity in ancient Thrace, but archaeological proof of compact “Celtic” enclaves among “Thracians” remains problematic. The integration of personal adornment or weaponry of La Tène type in a local cultural milieu (Latenization) during the third century, as well as significant changes in material expressions of status and identity in the eastern Balkans, make the matter even more peculiar. Seven decades after Jacobsthal’s (1940) paper, “Celts in Thrace” continues to be a favorite choice of a title for publication on the subject, but recently it is more often accompanied by a question mark, which paradoxically seems to confirm the difficulties inherent in the unilateral interpretation of La Tène finds in the region as indications of “Celtic” graves or settlements (Emilov and Megaw 2012). In this respect, some of the so-called “original Celtic” objects from ancient Thrace, the bronze fittings in “Plastic” style from the Mal-tepe tholos tomb near Mezek (Megaw 2005; 2012; Stoyanov 2005; 2010), were considered by Jacobsthal (1944) to be related to the chariot burial of a Galatian chieftain of Tyliš; recent reevaluation of their context suggests that a selection of decorated items and chariot pieces was deposited in the building as trophies after the victory of Antigonos Gonatas over the “border guards” (Emilov and Megaw 2012).

Some scholars discuss the local manufacture and distribution of artifacts with La Tène form as direct evidence of “Celtic” settlement in the region (Lazarov 2010; Manov 2010; Anastassov 2011). A contextual approach to these finds, however, does not support any unequivocal interpretation of the artifacts in an “ethnic” framework and raises numerous questions about the mechanisms of contact and the interrelations between individuals and groups with different

cultural and social backgrounds. La Tène fibulae and bracelets discovered in early Hellenistic settlement centers can signal the “peaceful establishment of small groups, mostly of women, coming from Central and Western Europe” (Anastassov 2011, 233), but numerous associations of La Tène jewelry with “Thracian type” fibulae and Hellenistic grave goods point to conclusions about local adaptation and integration of La Tène elements as an essential part of both male and female costume (Tonkova 2006; Emilov 2007; 2010). Matrimonial migration certainly played an important role in the diffusion of cultural templates (Rustoiu 2011), even if J. Anastassov’s (2011) vision about bands of “Celtic” brides searching for husbands in Thrace sounds rather extraordinary and is not a very credible theoretical explanation of “Celtic expansion” and “penetration.” Local manufacture of La Tène artifacts, however, involves technological transfer. Hence it is necessary to consider other “male” categories of individual or group mobility, like craftsmen and metalworkers (Arnold 2005, 19) operating along the “Danubian corridor” (Rustoiu 2012, 367, on mobility and affiliation of the artisans to elite).

A flat grave with a La Tène C1 sword and a Hellenistic type of helmet deposited in a deep pit in the environs of Seuthopolis (Domaradzki 1984, 133) represents a grave structure and context unusual for southern Thrace, although not uncommon for the burials of Transylvanian or Danubian “Celts.” At the current level of exploration, any attempt to define “dominant” archaeological features and to (re)construct ethnic identity on the basis of material remains seems relative and subjective. Nevertheless, the context of the grave inventory in this 1.4 m deep pit, which compares well with assemblages from the eastern parts of the La Tène zone, may hint that the deceased was not of local origin. The discovery of a deliberately deformed La Tène sword and scabbard among the remains of a funeral pyre in tumulus N1 of the Hellenistic necropolis of Philippopolis (Megaw 2004, 103; Bouzek 2005, 96; Emilov 2010, 79–82) and the association of these items with pottery sets of local and imported vessels pose additional questions about both warrior identity in relation to ethnicity and mercenary activities as a widespread category of individual and group mobility (Rustoiu 2012; Hauschild 2012).

The graves with La Tène C1 swords near Seuthopolis and Philippopolis in Thrace, as well as the equipment of a “Celtic” warrior from Lychnidos (modern Ohrid) in the central Balkans (Guštin, Malenko, and Kuzman 2011), stand out from the general pattern as the presumed “last resting places” of “Celtic” mercenaries in the service of major urban centers (Emilov and Megaw 2012, 23). It is logical to argue that the communities under Komontorios and Kavaros’ control, known from the ancient written sources, were not the only Galatian group in Thrace. A conspicuous lack of “truly Celtic” settlements in the eastern Balkans, however, suggests a process of integration of the “western newcomers” rather than their exclusion and the formation of compact “Celtic” enclaves. A. Rustoiu (2011, 164) observes, in

the same vein, that the number of assemblages with La Tène finds in “Thracian lands,” dated to the time of the Great expedition and its aftermath, “remains small, compared with the territories inhabited by the Celtic groups in the Carpathian Basin.” The note refers to a concentration of La Tène B2–C1 fibulae, belts, and bracelets, as well as discoveries of typical “Celtic” knives (of the so-called Hiebmesser type), in the valley of the middle reaches of Golyama Kamchiya river in northeastern Bulgaria, which are frequently discussed as important proofs of a “Celtic” enclave there (Lazarov 2010; Anastassov 2011). With no reliable information about the archaeological context of these items, it remains difficult to support their interpretation as credible evidence of large-scale “Celtic” settlement in the region. Detailed typological analysis, however, confirms links between the inhabitants of the river valleys to the north of the eastern Balkan range and their contemporaries in central and western Europe after the Great expedition; and so various scenarios involving the migration or infiltration of individuals and small groups, like warrior contingents and tribal segments from Moravia, Bohemia, and the Carpathian basin cannot be ruled out. Bronze coins issued in Kavaros’ name have also been discovered in this region, which led L. Lazarov to conclude that, at the height of his power, Kavaros managed to include in his sphere of influence the communities situated near the chorai of the west Pontic poleis Odessos and Messambria (Domaradzki 1995; Lazarov 2010). Even the proponents of large-scale population movement, however, admit a “cultural syncretism” that is reflected not only in several types of Kavaros’ bronze coins, but also in the “material culture” of the “Celts in Thrace” (Lazarov 2010, 110). The mobility of these groups in the eastern Balkans, as well as the processes of interaction between “Hellenization” and “Latenization” affecting both “indigenous communities” (Džino 2007, 59) and the incoming migrant individuals and groups from temperate Europe (Emilov 2007, 2010), could better explain our current difficulties in the archaeological recognition of Thracian Galatians.

Tylys as political epicenter of the “Celtic presence in Thrace” “lasted only two generations” (Cunliffe 1997, 173). The Great expedition to the Balkans and concomitant contacts between “Celts” and “Thracians” during the period of raids were followed by almost three centuries of dynamic relations between the groups in the eastern Balkans and tribal unions along the Danubian corridor or beyond the Carpathians. A “warrior ethos and cultural aesthetics that symbolized the ethos of Temperate Europe, negotiated with the existing indigenous cultural habitus” (Džino 2007) and, with cultural templates of the Hellenistic koine in wine consumption and “southern civilized manners,” continued to influence expressions of status or identity as evidenced by the archaeological record in the region. Stylistic features of a La Tène C1 sword scabbard, decorated with dragon- or bird-pair design, from the tumular grave near Pavolche, Vratsa region, in northwestern Bulgaria suggest the western Balkans or central Europe as the probable place of manufacture (Megaw et al.

2000), while the construction of this grave and the evidence for an associated funeral rite are entirely “typical” of the Triballoi during the Hellenistic period. Different interpretations of this scabbard are possible: as booty; as evidence of gift exchange in the framework of peer–polity interaction; or even as a status marker of a Scordiscian warrior, who had settled under the shadows of Haemus and adopted local funerary customs (Theodossiev 2005, 89–90).

Grave inventories in southern and northeastern Thrace dated to the very end of the third and the first half of the second century raise similar questions about the extent of “Latenization” and “Hellenization” among the warrior elite. Various elements of La Tène C1 and C2/D1 weapons and armament, including sword, chain mail tunic, and shield umbo (Megaw 2004; Emilov 2007; Anastassov 2011), accompanied the bones of the high-status individuals buried in the tumular necropolis in the vicinity of Kalново (Atanasov 1992) or in Sashova mogila near Shipka (Kitov 1996). Below-ground chambers with shafts in the valley of the Kamchiya river (00391tanassov and Yorgov 2007, 43–44) or the “Macedonian” barrel-vaulted tomb in the Kazanlak plain clearly recall burial rites and constructions that had been popular during the late fourth and early third century, while depositions of imported amphorae in these funerary structures reveal active connections to Aegean and Pontic wine and oil producers, as well as the demand for these commodities among the elite in the manner of their early Hellenistic predecessors. In the case of the Kalново grave inventory, one could even try to imagine a biography of a warrior band leader, who spent some years of mercenary service in the armies of the Hellenistic kings, returned home in the valley of Kamchiya river, and died a decade or two after the collapse of Kavaros’ kingdom.

The best example of the middle La Tène and middle Hellenistic process of “amalgamation” is a gold double-spring fibula, discovered near the human skeleton in the chamber of Sashova mogila tomb, decorated in gold filigree and granules and inlaid with cloisonné enamel (Tonkova 2002, 106). This item, “executed in eclectic Graeco-Celtic style” (Treister 2004, 195), illustrates the adaptation of Hellenistic fashion to La Tène construction and presents an important reference point for understanding various foreign influences and local responses in ancient Thrace during the period after the “Celtic” raids and before the Roman conquest.

In contrast to conclusions about the archaeologically invisible early contacts between “Thracians” and “Celts,” their interactions during the second and first centuries are visible not only in imagery on late Hellenistic silverware. The emergence of a supra-tribal fashion among a social stratum of cavalrymen in the Balkans, equipped with La Tène D shields and swords (Woźniak 1976; Rustoiu 2005; Łuczkiewicz and Schönfelder 2008), as well as the trends expressed in the ornaments of their wives (Guštin 2011), suggest sophisticated networks of interrelations involving mobility and exchange in central and southeastern Europe along the Danubian corridor. One can see the “barbarian

commonwealth” as part of the reaction (and offering an alternative) to Roman involvement. The arrival of Roman legions, the establishment of Roman rule in this wide geographical area, and the concomitant “Romanization” (whatever that might be) bring new challenges to communities, known as “Thracians” and “Celts,” but this is a topic for another chapter.

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Megaw, Ruth, and Vincent Megaw. 2011. “The Elusive Arts: A Study of Continental Early Celtic Art Since 1944.” In *The Black Sea, Greece, Anatolia and Europe in the First Millennium BC*, edited by Gocha Tsetschladze, 265–316. Leuven: Peeters. Informative, retrospective discussion about the origin(s) of early Celtic arts, as well as current debates on the transmission of “Oriental” or “Orientalizing” elements to the West.

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Tomaschitz, Kurt. 2002. *Die Wanderungen der Kelten in der antiken literarischen Überlieferung*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Offers an in-depth analysis of the preserved textual evidence in the ancient literary tradition about the Celtic migrations, including the Balkan campaigns and the enigmatic Tylis kingdom.

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Notes

- 1 All ancient dates are BCE, unless otherwise noted.
- 2 Temperate Europe designates the territories north of the Mediterranean and the Alps. Both Hecataeus of Miletus and Herodotus describe the inhabitants of these regions as Keltoi (Tomaschitz 2002, 15–19). In order to avoid imposing modern notions of supra-identity onto various ancient communities, who presumably shared similar lifestyle, all ethnic designations in the present contribution will be placed in quotation marks. More on the use of the term “Celts” or “whatever is meant by Celts” can be found in a recent overview by S. Rieckhoff (2012).
- 3 La Tène is a site at Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland, which has given its name to the second period of the Iron Age in Temperate Europe until the Roman conquest; on La Tène and La-Tène-Kultur, see Kaenel 2012 and Urban 2012.

Part V
Controversies

Chapter 25

Social Life of Thrace

Zosia Archibald

25.1 Literary Sources on Ancient Thracian Society

In Book 7 of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, when the surviving Greek mercenary army, which had largely avoided capture or confrontation in its return journey from the River Euphrates to the Bosphorus in 400,¹ took up service with the Thracian Seuthes, readers seem at first sight to be given a panorama of Thracian society. There is a local ruler, or would-be ruler, Seuthes, who takes on the mercenary army for one month (Xen., *Anab.* 7.1.5, 2.36). We get what appears to be a first-person narrative from Seuthes' own lips, describing his personal background, including the dispossession of his father, Maisades, evidently a man of rank and property in the southeastern parts of Thrace, bordering on the Black Sea coast, but excluding the hinterland of Byzantion (7.2.32). He had been a ruler himself, though a princeling, it seems, of the Melanditai, Tranipsai, and Thynoi, communities that can all be located inland of the Black Sea, above Salmydessos (7.2.22). There is also a "high" king, Medokos, located in the interior, to whom interstate embassies are directed (7.3.13–16: emissaries from the city of Parion, bearing gifts). We also hear about other men entrusted with military and administrative responsibilities, who served Seuthes as his lieutenants, and owned territory in the region (7.1.5, 2.10, 2.23–25, 7.15–16: Medosades; 7.2.32, 4.21, 5.1: other high-ranking Odrysians). The intervention of the Greek mercenaries shows the modern reader what happened when a huddle of villages, whose inhabitants otherwise minded their own business, were suddenly catapulted into an aggressive scenario. First they escaped from their lowland settlements into the mountains. Then, when threatened with having their property burned down by Xenophon and his freebooters, they decided to come down and negotiate.

The villagers were not left alone. Some found themselves being taken away as captives, evidently to be sold as slaves (7.3.48). Xenophon put the figure at around a thousand, alongside twice as many cattle, and perhaps tens of thousands of other small animals – mainly sheep and goats. These people ended up being sold in the market at Perinthos, on the coast west of Byzantion, by an intermediary from Maroneia, called Herakleides, who seems to have been good at making himself useful, though Xenophon wants us to have the impression that this was mainly about being useful to his own pocket (7.4.2; cf. 7.5.2). This first-person narrative tells us more about the social processes involved in human traffic on the northern coasts of the Aegean than any documents could, short of actual commercial contracts, of which there is a

growing number from the Black Sea, though not from the Aegean coast itself, except for one from Torone, in Chalkidice. A law from Abdera, dating from ca. 350, regulates the sale of people and pack animals, stipulating that a surety needed to be provided by the sellers (presumably in case the sale fell through). This provides exactly the kind of context for the sale of “booty” undertaken by Herakleides on behalf of Xenophon and his fellow mercenaries.²

The impression Xenophon wanted to make on readers of the *Anabasis* was of a feisty band of brothers, who might disagree at times about what they should do next, but who fundamentally shared the same outlook. He proudly sacrificed the due animals when this was required, waiting patiently for the right omens,³ and thought of himself as a defender of human freedom (7.7.29, 31). This did not stop him from attacking civilians and kidnapping them, in order to build up some capital, and being quite open about the idea of free individuals being enslaved (because some of the villagers amongst the Thyni, who had been attacked by the Greek mercenaries, tried to defend their village (7.4.24)). Despite his philosophical and scholarly pretensions, Xenophon does not appear to see anything contradictory in his speech about human freedom and his unvarnished acceptance that might is right. From this point of view, Xenophon is a less self-conscious commentator on contemporary societies than Herodotus had been (on whose Thracian perspective see further Irwin 2007). By the same token, the modern reader needs to consider his vivid and colorful scenes of Thracian provincial life with a degree of skepticism. At least, we need to be aware of the fact that the author had his own reasons for writing this account in the way he did, and that Xenophon’s reasons shape the narrative as a whole.

Considering the length of time that his mercenaries were operating in European Thrace, there is less historical content in the chapters of this book than the reader might like – evidence that the author was certainly aware of. We can see the difference of perspective when we compare the content of Book 7 of the *Anabasis* with those chapters of the *Hellenika* where Seuthes appears on the international scene, cooperating in the winter of 398 with the Spartan commander Derkylidas, who was conducting a campaign against native Bithynians, and in the following year provided support for the same Derkylidas (Hell. 3.2.2–5, 9), when he set about rebuilding the wall across the neck of the isthmus, whose earliest version dated from the time of Miltiades, son of Kypselos, of Athens, with the apparent aim of keeping Apsinthians from making incursions into the peninsula (Hdt. 6.35–36). It is tempting to think that Xenophon, writing with hindsight about events that had taken place several decades earlier, was conscious of the fact that he had very quickly ceased to be at the center of attention in the area of the Hellespontine Straits, where more powerful individuals had taken over the prosecution of military policy. Xenophon, who was yesterday’s man by then, spends a good deal of ink in Book 7 (chapters 6 and 7) explaining to the reader that he had done

everything in his power to deliver pay to the Greek mercenaries and to deflect arguments that he had received gifts on the side, which his pals did not know about (e.g., *Anab.* 7.7.44). Xenophon's attention on these matters means that the rather casual references he makes to Thracian leaders and commanders deserve to be examined closely, since he himself does not seem interested in the relative importance of local and regional issues.

Herodotus, who was interested in a very big historical and geographical canvas, manages to introduce a considerable amount of nuance, as well as providing some general impressions of Thracians and their lifestyles (especially about their populousness: *Hdt.* 5.3; the taste of the better off for polygamy: 5.5; of the impoverished for selling their children; the freedom of unmarried girls and strict control over wives: 5.6; the burial customs of rich men: 5.7–8). The historian had an eye and an ear for the unusual and the exotic. So he chose to write about the curiously black world view of the Trausi on the one hand (5.5), and the immortality of the Getae on the other, which idea seems to have proved especially intriguing, since Herodotus provides a digression about this theme, including two different stories about Salmoxis, which interrupt his description of the progress of the Persian King Darius across the Strandja range and along the western Black Sea coast, through the territories of the lowland communities, the Skirmiadaï and Nipsaioi, whom he locates “above” or “beyond” (ὑπέρ = hyper) Apollonia and Mesembria (4.93–96.2).

The three chapters that Herodotus offers his readers about the Getae and Salmoxis/Zalmoxis are a striking example of the layers of reflection and thoughtfulness that the historian had accumulated over the course of his researches. They form a very brief interlude in a chapter that is mainly concerned with the so-called Scythian logos, which takes the reader from the Bosphorus to the steppe regions. Yet the two stories about Salmoxis/Zalmoxis are replete with detail and suggestion. The first story presents us with the conviction of the Getae that they will go to Salmoxis when they die, and then offers us a vision of men being tossed in the air on spearheads, in order to effect their passage into the next world. The second story, on the other hand, which Herodotus is careful to distance himself from, concerns the notion of a “historical” Salmoxis, a slave in the household of Pythagoras on Samos, who learned a great deal from the philosopher and from other Ionian thinkers, developed his own theories of immortality, and proceeded to put these into practice amongst his own people, spending three years in an underground chamber. The historian discreetly points out that if Salmoxis were a historical figure, he would have lived long before Pythagoras. Herodotus' many-layered presentation of these concepts shows that he had considered the significance of the Salmoxis legend both in the context of contemporary metaphysical ideas, but had also thought through the ways in which the different communities in his broad historical perspective succeeded in articulating the

universal challenges of human existence and added something to the international dimension of cultural practice.

Thucydides the historian had personal connections with Thrace. He tells us that he had inherited mining rights in gold mines on the mainland opposite Thasos (4.105.1), which meant, according to his own account, that he had considerable influence among people of standing there. His father's name, Oloros, is the same as that of the grandfather of the great Athenian general and plenipotentiary, Kimon – a Thracian landowner called Oloros, whose daughter Hegesipyle had married Miltiades the Younger (Hdt. 6.39.2). The elder Oloros is otherwise unknown, but most scholars assume that Thucydides' hereditary rights stemmed from this connection, which must have been more significant than the rather dry reference he himself gives would suggest. The great Athenian family of the Philaidai, who had become associated, through Miltiades the Elder, with personal rule in the Chersonese, are unlikely to have contemplated a union with anyone who was not a man of exceptional standing. Herodotus' account of Miltiades the Younger's assumption of power makes it clear that the marriage to Hegesipyle was material to his success as a ruler. So we are led to conclude that Oloros was a man of substance with wide-ranging influence in southern Thrace. This is also important evidence that there were exceptional leaders in the region before the period of the Persian Wars, which heralded the emergence of a dynastic ruling house among the Odrysians, who are briefly mentioned by Herodotus in the context of Darius' invasion of Scythia and again during Xerxes' invasion of Greece (4.80; cf. 7.137.3).

Thucydides knew a great deal about the interior of Thrace and has left some tantalizing hints of this knowledge in his account of king Sitalkes' invasion of the Chalkidic peninsula in 429 (2.95–101). In terms of Thracian society, the most important statements he makes are those concerning the ethnic composition and geographical extent of the Odrysian kingdom (2.96–97). We learn about a wide range of named communities, though the ones that are referred to specifically seem to have concentrated particularly in the Thracian Plain, in the center of the country, and in the south, both within Mount Rhodope and to the south of this range, although Thucydides did know people who had traveled as far as the Danube, and knew that this was a journey of 11 days, whilst a traveler crossing the kingdom from Byzantion to the land of the Laiaioi would take 13 days, in good conditions (2.96.1–2).⁴ This detailed knowledge suggests that his dynastic connections also gave him openings at the Odrysian royal court, or to some of its higher-placed individuals. When the historian talks about his contacts with influential people, he may have the king and his entourage in mind, who in 424 might still have been Sitalkes, and if not his successor, Seuthes (I), rather than some local landowners in the vicinity of Amphipolis. Mining rights, particularly to gold mines, were the privilege of leaders, not their lieutenants.

Thucydides ought to be our most informative historical source. His statement about the nature of royal revenues, and of gifts that were assiduously offered, to the *paradynasteuontai* (literally, “those ruling alongside”) and *gennaioi* (nobles) of the Odrysians, is accompanied by the emphatic contrast between the Persian and Odrysian Thracian practice of gift-giving, with the collective onus being placed on the donor, and the respective kudos on the recipient (2.97.3–4). The contrast that Thucydides implies between Persian and Thracian customs of gift-giving is no longer very transparent. The revenues of the Persian Empire and of the Odrysian kings of Thrace both relied on a system of tribute payment in the form of metals and other commodities. Sculpted reliefs on the Apadana staircase at Persepolis show processions of tribute-bearing subjects. Xenophon, like Thucydides, refers to the importance of giving presents among the Odrysians (Anab. 7.3.13, 16–18, 26–27). The relationship between giving and receiving remains a subtle one, with individual power relations overlapping with the wider customs connected to revenue collection.

Thucydides’ brief but highly perceptive comments and Herodotus’ depth of vision should play a larger part in informing our perception of the communities that lived in the east Balkans in the second half of the first millennium. Yet it is Xenophon whose autopsy has generally been given greater prominence in modern analyses of Thracian society, despite the fact that his account of the Greek mercenaries’ experiences in Thrace is focused on the mercenaries, and their Spartan associates, rather than on native customs. Nevertheless, Xenophon’s account provides direct evidence of interactions between Thracian troops and their commanders and Greeks operating inland, whether for military, diplomatic, or commercial purposes.

These literary accounts from the second half of the fifth and early fourth centuries are the most revealing reports of east Balkan societies to have survived from the second half of the first millennium. Book 7 of Strabo’s *Geography* covered this terrain, and Strabo did engage with some of the specific topics covered by his predecessors. He cited a number of other authors who wrote about the polygamous practices of the wealthier Thracians, including fragments from lost plays by Menander.⁵ But Strabo was primarily interested in the geography of the region and its resources; social content is included partly as anecdotal relief, partly as moralizing themes, such as his comments on the merits of a frugal lifestyle, compared with the excesses and immorality of his own contemporaries (7.3.7–8 (C301)). Occasionally we find valuable nuggets in later sources. The fifth-century CE lexicographer Hesychius refers to the term *Zibythides*, which means noble Thracian men and women, and must have been drawn from a much earlier literary source.⁶

Greek writers thus give us glimpses of mores at either end of the Thracian social spectrum – the polygamous élite, with half a dozen or more wives, honored in death as well as life; and the frugal, apparently landless men, who

were unmarried, possibly deliberately so, but who nevertheless had a measure of social respect because of this status – whether these were indeed shamans or not (Strabo 7.3.4).⁷

25.2 Theories about Thracian Society

Greek authors had various reasons for writing about the north Aegean and beyond. Herodotus alone made the ethnography of the Mediterranean and Near East his main subject matter. But even he gives only a very partial view of Thracian society. Modern scholars have had to interpret this evidence in the light of general social theories of ancient societies. Karl Marx formulated his economic theories about the remote past at a time when historians had not yet developed any coherent social theories of Classical antiquity. It is not therefore surprising that Marx's proposition that Classical societies were early examples of class formation have been among the most influential theories to shape ideas about Thracian society. The study of ancient history as a subject area distinct from Classical philology did not become widely established in university departments until the twentieth century. By the time that scholars such as Gavril Katsarov (Kazarow 1916) began to compile synthetic studies of Thracian culture, antiquarians and archaeologists had accumulated a wealth of material evidence to put alongside the literary sources.

It would be impossible to discuss the conceptualization of Thracian society without referring to Michael I. Rostovtzeff, whose main specialist publications were on Scythian culture, but whose omnivorous research on the ancient Classical world included an important sketch of Classical Thrace in the opening sections of his *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* (1941, 111). This formed a prelude to his main topic, but encapsulated a good deal of contemporary scholarship, presenting this in a broader intercultural context. As a scholar living in exile after 1918, and spending the productive years of his research mainly at Yale, in the United States, Rostovtzeff's ideas about ancient societies were based on analyses formed before the Russian Revolution and continued to be formulated in conservative terms, with assumptions about social orders and classes that sounded (in the ears of historians writing after the Second World War) "modernist" in tone, even if Rostovtzeff himself thought of his opinions as balanced between the viewpoints of the great proponents of *Universalgeschichte*, E. Meyer and K. J. Beloch – on the modernizing end of the historiographical spectrum – and those like K. Bücher and J. Hasebroek, who felt that ancient societies were much more "primitive" in character than contemporary historians imagined (see further Archibald 2001).

Theory, Marxian or otherwise, did not make a significant impact on studies of Thrace until after the Second World War, when Bulgarian scholars, following

the lead of influential Soviet philologists and archaeologists, working on social relations between Scythians and Greeks in south Russia and Ukraine (K. K. Zelin, M. K. Trofimova, L. M. Gluskina, E. S. Golubtsova, G. A. Koshelenko), began to develop ideas about the distinctive character of Thracian culture, and the differences between Thracians and their neighbors, particularly Greeks living along the shores of the Black Sea, the Aegean, and Propontis. These ideas were stimulated further by the discovery and rescue excavation of the Thracian city of Seuthopolis, in the Valley of the Roses, west of Kazanlak, and identified by an inscription in Greek found at the site (IGBulg 3.2, no. 1731; Velkov 1991, 7, no. 1; Elvers 1994). The excavations were subsequently buried under the Georgi Dimitrov (Koprinka) Dam. Seuthopolis followed the equally sensational discovery of a vaulted tomb with magnificent painted decoration just above the town of Kazanlak, and the gold treasure found near Panagyurishte in 1949.

Seuthopolis provided the most important focus for social theory about ancient Thrace. The excavations revealed a fortified civic center, with a separately fortified inner enclosure, comprising a single building complex, subsequently identified as a royal residence (although this identification has not been universally accepted); and, outside it, a grid pattern of streets, separating large house units. The first presentations of the evidence by the Director of excavations, D. P. Dimitrov, began to appear in the late 1950s. An important synthesis of the field data was published in English in 1978, by the two principal excavators, D. P. Dimitrov and M. Chichikova, but is not often cited. The first Bulgarian monographs began to appear in 1984. Dimitrov identified the excavated “city” of Seuthopolis as the capital of Seuthes III (whose impact could be identified not only through the reference to it in the inscription found on the acropolis, but in coins depicting the portrait head of Seuthes), and developed a theory about royal residential centers, based around a fortified enclosure with a tower, resembling the location where Xenophon first met Seuthes, the prince of the Propontic region (Anab. 7.2.21), although there is a fuller description of such a residence later in the Anabasis, when Xenophon and his mercenaries attacked Asidates, in Mysia (7.8.12–14).

The ancient material culture that was emerging from below ground in the Valley of the Roses ensured that the period between the fourth and third centuries became the fulcrum of theoretical debate. Scholars were interested in exploring the distinctiveness of Thracian culture. The study of the past is never dissociated from preoccupations in the present. Studying ancient societies was a way of developing new approaches to modern society and heritage. Archaeological discoveries provided a setting in which the modern societies of southern Europe could present new research in national and international contexts, outside the constraints of political, and party political, allegiances and differences. The forum for international scholarship became the International Congress of Thracology, whose first meeting took place in

1972, the same year in which the Institute of Thracology was formed under the aegis of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia (also the venue for the first Congress). Bulgarian scholars have been the driving force behind the study of ancient Thracian society, although the Congress has increasingly drawn in researchers from other countries. The identification of Thracian culture as a distinct historical phenomenon has had wide implications in terms of the organization and management of research. The Institute of Archaeology in Sofia has a separate Section for Thracian Archaeology, which covers the Bronze Age and Iron Age of Bulgaria, and is distinct from Ancient Archaeology, a Section that covers the investigation of historically attested civic centers along the Black Sea coast. The guiding spirit behind these scholarly developments, and its leading theorist, has been Alexander Fol. It was Fol who took up Dimitrov's concept of the royal residence and incorporated it in a series of studies about Thrace, beginning with an important monograph, published in 1975. Fol was interested in what he termed the Palaeo-Balkan heritage of southern Europe and its distinctive historic contribution to European culture. He identified Thracian culture as characterized by ethnos identification, in contrast to the polis structures of the Greek world, and developed a discourse on the essentially oral nature of Thracian culture, in juxtaposition with the written cultures, as he saw them, of Greek speakers.

Some of these ideas have remained controversial; others have been more widely accepted. Two topics in particular have aroused a good deal of scholarly interest and they are conceptually closely connected. The first is the nature of settlement life, while the second is the status of ordinary Thracians. What were the majority of settlements like? Was land privately owned? Were most Thracians free, or did they owe everything to the country's rulers, and were therefore, to all intents, dependent on them? These are the kinds of questions that scholars, particularly Bulgarian scholars, were asking themselves in the period between the 1970s and the 1990s. The debate was partly determined by the discourse on the ancient city. Marx had identified ancient Classical cities as the seats of slave-owning élites. Students of ancient Greek societies became especially interested in the idea of the polis, and the "rise" of polis-based societies has done a great deal to shape scholarly research in the Mediterranean, especially the eastern Mediterranean, during the last four decades. The single greatest contribution to this interest has been the *Inventory of Archaic and Classical poleis* (Hansen and Nielsen 2004). In some respects, the publication of this massive resource on certain types of ancient settlement nuclei has exposed some of the formal and conceptual problems associated with the project. The organization of entries by place-names has given prominence to names that may have had an ephemeral physical presence, while entries that, for one reason or another, have no surviving ancient name associated with them, have proved hard to characterize. The contributors have in some cases struggled to answer their

remit, whilst retaining a fair coverage of settlements for their given area. The format of contributions does not allow for any evaluation of total site numbers in a particular region, that is, in relation to the names inventoried. So the attentive reader cannot judge whether only a part of the overall settlement pattern is fairly represented in the surviving documentary record, or whether there are huge gaps.

This question may be less pressing in coastal areas, where periploi and other geographical accounts or epigraphic records (notably the Athenian Tribute Lists), provide extensive information about a large number of settlements, albeit for limited periods. It becomes much more relevant as soon as regions further away from coastlines are considered. Many inland parts of the Greek mainland were organized along territorial lines, often for rather specific historical reasons, whether we consider Sparta and its neighbors in the southern Peloponnese, Arkadia and Elis, Aetolia, or Thessaly. In these areas, the *ethnos* was often a key determining unit, even though settlement foci, whether spatially extended ones, or more nucleated agglomerations, could be termed *poleis* in various accounts or documents (Morgan 2003). In this respect, the *ethnos* as a social unit was an important organizing principle in Greece, just as it was in non-Greek-speaking areas of southern Europe and Asia Minor. At the same time, the *polis* as a form of social organization was manifestly present in Thrace, as the Seuthopolis inscription clearly demonstrated, even though the nature of political forms that this name parades has sometimes been qualified (cf. Archibald 2004; Dimitrov 2011). Although the title of the Inventory does not specify its geographical remit with any precision, the editors have, on the one hand, included regions with culturally and ethnically mixed populations, such as southern Italy, Sicily, Macedonia, Thrace, Asia Minor, and the land areas surrounding the Black Sea; on the other hand, these same areas have not been examined to include all settlement types, but rather only those that approximate to their definition of *polis*. This makes it difficult to relate the contents in a transparent way to studies of population distribution in the same regions.

At an early stage of the scholarly debate about Thracian social structures, Alexander Fol took the view that rulers had absolute power over their territory and its people, by virtue of their religious or cult responsibilities, as well as their political roles. This implied that ordinary Thracians lacked rights to property and land ownership, and were in essence dependent on their rulers. From the 1980s onwards, Fol moved the focus of his research increasingly towards the investigation of abstract ideas and cult associations, culminating in his book on Thracian Orphism (1986). The study of Thracian social structures, and their relationship to known population settlements and material evidence, was left largely to other scholars. In the Institute of Thracology, there were aspirations to build on Fol's ideas. K. Porozhanov has distinguished a number of sites as "royal residences," fortified enclosures with

a proto-urban character (esp. Porozhanov 2009). It remains to be seen whether the physical remains of some 20 sites in southeastern Thrace, alongside Seuthopolis, can be identified from etymological and spatial evidence as socially distinctive environments. The question of land ownership and social autonomy remain unresolved so long as a more closely argued thesis about Thracian society is lacking.

The historian Margarita Tacheva developed the most sustained narrative about Thracian social structures in a series of reflections published originally in 1987 and republished in an expanded edition in 1997. Tacheva recognized that one of the operating factors in any solution to some of the methodological problems in this discussion was the role played by Macedonian institutions, since it was a dynasty of Macedonian monarchs, beginning with Philip II, who affected social organization in Thrace just at the time when it becomes historically as well as materially visible. Tacheva believed that those fortified sites that display a degree of urban planning, such as Seuthopolis, were royal residences, as D. P. Dimitrov (1957, 70–71; 1958, 697–698; 1984, 17) and Fol (1990, 88, 104–105, 166) had argued, and that production was driven by the needs of the royal élite, whose members occupied the houses revealed in excavations, and who were subsequently buried in the chamber tombs identified in the vicinity of the city. True autonomy, with the private ownership of land and the development of open markets, did not, in her view, take place until after the establishment of Roman provincial organization in the first century CE (Tacheva 1997, 13–50, 96–149, esp. 146).

Tacheva's thesis, which links economic relations with social relations, has thrown into sharp relief the contrasting interpretations by different scholars of Thracian social structures in the pre-Imperial period. Her ideas reflect a top-down view of society, in which rulers have absolute control over all activities and events. This view reflects a long tradition of historical analysis, which was particularly marked in Russian research during the twentieth century, and which tried to isolate certain essential characteristics that made one society different from another. Royal power, in her perspective, was exclusive and Thracian society was divided into power-holders and the powerless. In this respect her views did not differ substantially from those of D. P. Dimitrov and, for somewhat different reasons, Alexander Fol. The powerless included a variety of retainers and dependent craftsmen, as well as those who are otherwise classified as slaves. Xenophon's account of southern Thrace shows how easily slaves could be made from otherwise free individuals. Xenophon's account is rather imprecise about social relations, as I have indicated; but the historian's rhetoric about freedom would have little value if the Thracians who were addressed in his speeches had no freedom. Either Xenophon's speeches bear no relationship to actual practice in Thrace, or the radical interpretations of royal rule, such as Tacheva's, have been unduly categorical about the nature of social stratification. This is not to deny that slaves existed

in royal households and that Thrace was one of the key sources of slaves in the Aegean (Velkov 1964; 1967). A recent reevaluation of the evidence for the origins of slaves in the Aegean area shows that although slaves identified in various ways as having come from Thrace form a significant component of the pool, they need to be viewed alongside other, equally significant sources, notably the interior of Asia Minor and other provinces of the Persian Empire (Lewis 2011).

Archaeological approaches to social organization have developed along rather different lines. Velizar Velkov, philologist, historian of slavery, and epigrapher, was troubled by the absence of a systematic approach to settlement identity and formation. He founded the series of symposia entitled "Settlement Life in Thrace," which have provided a forum for the accumulation of data and ideas about community organization. One of the great assets of these symposia has been the willingness of organizers and contributors to explore all kinds of settlement organization, including evidence from the Black Sea ports, Thracian settlements along the Aegean coastline and in Turkey, as well as the evidence of evolving community structures at Roman cities with pre-Roman foundations, as well as other inland sites. This has enabled a fruitful dialogue between students of complex urban sites, such as Kabyle, Philippopolis, and Seuthopolis, as well as those that have been less easily categorized, some of which have ancient names (such as Dobelt-Deultum), but many more of which are unnamed.

Developing investigations at a number of complex urban sites are beginning to show that the economic status of a large number of ordinary inhabitants did not differ markedly from that of wealthier individuals. There can be no one-to-one relationship between archaeological finds and social relations; but in view of the explicit connection made by historians, such as Tacheva, between access to exchange facilities and social status, then we can argue that the material concomitants of everyday life should be fully explored when considering social relations. Totko Stoyanov explicitly rejected the claims made by D. P. Dimitrov about the supposedly inferior housing and conditions of the socially "powerless" living outside the walls of Seuthopolis, whose activities were identified particularly on the northwest side of the city's circuit, an area about twice the size of the enclosed territory of 5 ha (Stoyanov 2006, 85). His own investigations at the fortified site at Sboryanovo, identified with ancient Helis, show that extra-urban settlement extended initially over 20 ha, but developed and flourished at a number of separate locations within a wider area of ca. 100 ha. This larger ground area corresponds to the smallest category of urban nucleus identified by the Inventory of Archaic and Classical poleis. However, since many Greek poleis have sizes determined by the extent of their fortified circuits, rather than residential areas, and only 635 of the 1,035 identified sites (61%) can be connected with a known area, Sboryanovo would have been far from unusual amongst the range of small "urban"

centers. For the sake of comparison, Priene, in Ionia, one of the sites used for comparative purposes by Stoyanov, and whose urban circuit was defined at an uncertain date but still in the fourth century, enclosed 37 ha, of which 15 ha were available or suitable for residential accommodation, and could have contained ca. 500 domestic units (Hansen and Nielsen 2004, 1093, with further refs). Stoyanov has pointed out that although the building materials used in domestic construction often leave few traces other than roof tiles, the only inorganic materials that can be used as evidence, that is, artifacts and other material remains, including grave inventories, tend to suggest a much greater degree of shared characteristics, in Thracian society as a whole, than earlier scholars were prepared to admit.

25.3 Current Trends in Scholarship

The conclusions that we can draw about Thracian living standards are beginning to suggest that these were rather more homogeneous than the language of social differentiation implies. Recent work by Ian Morris on living standards in the Aegean might indicate a similar evaluation of the evidence for the fifth to fourth centuries at least (Morris 2005). In the case of Thracian sites, the apparent absence of large agglomerations of civic type may partly be due to insufficient field research in areas where we might expect some – not necessarily many – large centers, notably in the Thracian Plain. However, the limited scope of large agglomerations was also, in part, the result of a pattern of fragmented settlement. The least well understood aspect of this problem is the nature of country estates in the pre-Roman period. We know that Odrysian kings moved from one location to another, rather than having fixed centers of administration and justice (Theopomp. FGrHist 115 F31 = Athen. XII. 531e–532a). A recently published fortified site below the peak of Kozi Gramadi (1364 m), in the Sushtinska Sredna Gora range, north of the town of Starosel, and northwest of Plovdiv, may have been a royal or princely hunting lodge. The excavator initially suggested that this was a “sanctuary” (on the basis of the central, masonry structure), as well as a fortified princely residence, of the kind in which Xenophon first met prince Seuthes. The evidence of more extensive residential structures has increased as excavations have progressed (Christov 2011–2012). If this were a princely hunting lodge, we can explain both its location, high up in the mountains, as well as the site’s connections with the principal patterns of exchange. A surprising number of high value and copper alloy regal coins, belonging to Thracian and Macedonian rulers of the fourth century, as well as contemporary silver coins of Parion, the Thracian Chersonese, Thasos, and imitations of Thasian “Silenos and nymph” types, may represent a relatively short period of occupation of the site itself. The mountain and its vicinity were nevertheless visited at other times, as a hoard of late Republican denarii demonstrates.

The most influential views of the twentieth century have been based primarily on evidence drawn from Classical sources, mainly narrative literary accounts, and, to a lesser extent, epigraphic documents. Archaeological evidence has also played a part, in amplifying, moderating, and illuminating the literary data. One area that has been neglected in studies of the second half of the century, by comparison with early scholarship, is the wider international and intercultural dimension, as well as the broader development of social patterns over a larger time period. Studies of the Greek polis were reinvigorated by reexamination of the emergence of settlement agglomerations in the course of the first millennium (see, e.g., Morgan 2003). In the north Aegean coastal regions, investigation of settlement trends in the first half of the first millennium has provided important insights into patterns of land use in different ecological zones (Baralis 2010). This kind of work makes it feasible to compare Aegean Thracian social groups with those of neighboring coastal Macedonia (see, e.g., Perreault and Bonias 2010; Manakidou 2010; Tsiafaki 2010). I attempted to do something similar, looking at social formation in Macedonia, Thessaly, and Thrace a decade ago (Archibald 2000). At Adjijyska Vodenitsa, identified with ancient Pistiros, the nature of social interactions in Classical Thrace has perhaps been even more challenging than at any other settlement site. Here, on the banks of the River Hebros (Maritsa) west of Plovdiv, and a short distance from Mount Rhodope, the intense coexistence of merchants and traders, from a wide variety of origins, is reflected in the range of coins and artifacts that offer a spectrum of contemporary political and economic relations. Black Sea transport amphorae from Herakleia Pontika, Sinope, and coins from Mesembria and the Hellespontine region (particularly Parion and the Thracian Chersonese), are found alongside quantities of coins and containers from the north Aegean coast, notably Thasos, the Chalkidic peninsula, and fine pottery from Athens. Products of the area, and more generally of the east Balkan region, are represented by tiles and storage or table pottery, iron tools and weapons, metal jewelry and beads, as well as textiles (judging by the numbers of loom weights and spindle whorls). The inscription found 2 km away from the excavated site, which refers to the legislative framework for commerce in the region, in the time of Kotys I and under the administration of an unnamed successor, is entirely consistent with the evidence excavated at Adjijyska Vodenitsa (SEG 48.486, 46.872*, 47.1101; Velkov and Domaradzka 1994; Chankowski and Domaradzka 1999).

This work reflects studies of social groups in their economic and residential context. A parallel transformation has been taking place in scholarly understanding of institutional evolution, particularly of Macedonian institutions under the Argead kings (Hatzopoulos 1996). Until two decades ago, scholars believed that the kingdom of Macedonia was a highly militarized society, with a power structure focused firmly on the person of the king. Before the systematic study of epigraphic documents from the period of Argead rule, relations between rulers and their subjects, particularly subject

cities, were based largely on biographical material for the reigns of Philip II, Alexander III, and the last Antigonid kings, Philip V and Perseus, much of it written from hostile perspectives, or at later periods still. Epigraphy from the period of the Argeads has revealed that these relationships were much more nuanced than the biographical literature allows (see esp. Mari 2006). Not only do we now know a great deal more about the kinds of civic agglomerations that existed in the Macedonian interior, but it is also clear that these communities could dispose of land independently of any involvement by royal officials. At the same time, kings did allocate land acquired by conquest to favored members of the Macedonian élite (Hatzopoulos 1988; 2011). Nevertheless, deeds of sale from Amphipolis show that not all land in a conquered city was made over to new ownership, though individual plots might be sold to new owners, and for a variety of reasons. The consequences of these institutional developments have yet to be absorbed into current theory about Thracian society.

Thracian women may not have played a prominent role in political narratives, but their presence and importance is implicit, not just in Herodotus' and Thucydides' tales of dynastic marriages (such as that of Oloros' daughter Hegesipyle to the Athenian Miltiades the Younger) and in interstate negotiation, but also in various aspects of material culture. The generous provision of grave goods, not just in the burials of wealthier females, but on behalf of numerous women of less pretentious standing, makes clear that women's status, whether as kin, as mothers, or as organizers of households, was recognized with great seriousness. Women's graves were often accompanied by quantities of pottery, occasionally metal implements, including knives; as well as a surprising variety of personal ornaments. The polygamous practices already referred to did not necessarily imply that women were less highly valued than men. Polygamous societies of recent times suggest that only some men had multiple wives and that other men had none, which would have made women more, not less significant as social agents.

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Guide to Further Reading

Students of Herodotus and Thucydides have a formidable array of literature to choose from. For Herodotus, a commentary compiled by David Asheri and his team (2007), updated and edited for the English-language edition, is now the indispensable aid for students, just as Simon Hornblower’s (1991–2008) three-volume commentary is essential for Thucydides. Stronk’s (1995) commentary on the final part of Xenophon’s *Anabasis* deals with the adventures of the Cyrean mercenaries in southern Thrace. Thrace has received less attention from scholars of Herodotean ethnography (but see Karttunen 2002 and Irwin 2007; Sharankov 2006 on Salmoxis; and Kotova 2009 on Thracian women and kin structures; Archibald 2005 for related perspectives on Macedonian women). Baladié’s (1989) notes to the Budé edition of Strabo’s Book 7 are also fundamental for various aspects of ethnography and geography.

The most prolific scholar of ancient Thracian society has undoubtedly been Alexander Fol, whose early synthetic studies on politics and social groups (Fol 1972; 1975; see also Fol 1990) have been formative in constructing a discourse in the period after the Second World War. The epigraphic and archaeological finds from Seuthopolis have played a central role in Fol’s work and in subsequent debates on society. The excavators, D. P. Dimitrov and M. Chichikova, have made key contributions to this debate, as has their son, Kamen Dimitrov (Dimitrov 1957; 1958; 1984; Dimitrov and Chichikova 1978; K. Dimitrov 2011; see also now Nankov 2008; 2011; and Rose 2009 on concepts of class). Recent work on historically attested settlements in the east Balkan region (notably the cumulative picture of some inland and all

documented coastal sites in Hansen and Nielsen 2004) and systematic publication of data on Macedonian administration (Hatzopoulos 1988; 1996; 2011; Mari 2006; Paschidis 2006) has taken the discussion of social structures in new directions, which have yet to be considered in full for the Thracian interior. The nature of landholding remains a key concept for our understanding of society. This and other aspects of society and economy in the region are examined in more detail in Archibald 2013.

Notes

- 1 All ancient dates BCE, unless otherwise noted.
- 2 On the lead letters from Aegean contexts, see now Harris 2013; Torone lead contract: Henry 1991; Abdera law on the sale of slaves and pack animals: SEG 47.1026; IThrAeg E3, 186–190 and pl. 1; Andreau and Descat 2006, 104.
- 3 Xen., *Anab.* 6.4.12, 13, 16, 20–22, 25; 6.5.2; 6.5.8; 6.6.35; 7.2.15–16; 7.6.44 (to Zeus Basileus); 7.8.4 (to Zeus Meilichios).
- 4 Archibald 1998, 93–125, esp. 105–112, for a detailed analysis of geography and peoples.
- 5 Strabo 7.3.3, citing Poseidonios and Menander (fr. 794–795, Körte-Thierfelder = fr. 547–548, Kock); 7.3.4 (C297), Misogynes (fr. 326, Körte-Thierfelder; fr. 326 Kock).
- 6 Hesych. s.v. Zibuthides: hai Thraissai i Thraikes gnesioi.
- 7 Baladié 1989, 188–193, with comments and further references.

Chapter 26

Urbanization

Emil Nankov

26.1 Introduction

The study of urban forms and processes of urbanization has held a central place in the historiography of ancient Thrace. The topic has naturally assumed priority for scholars in Bulgaria whose task it was, especially with the foundation of the Institute of Thracology in 1972, to put Thrace on the map by treating it on an equal footing with the urban culture of ancient Greece (summary in Popov 2002, 45–58). The vitality of the discussion about cities in Thrace was further amplified by viewing them as a sign of state formation (e.g., Nikolov 1982, but in general see criticism of this approach in Osborne 2005, 2–3). Theoretically informed by the culture-historical school, scholarly discourse focused exclusively on ethnic interpretations of archaeological data and identification of towns through external criteria, following a much-quoted list proposed by V. G. Childe in the 1950s (cf. Herzog 1997, 4–5; Renfrew 2008, 46–48). The Childean model was taken to its extreme recently by Prof. V. Nikolov who argued that urbanization first began at the salt production center near Provadia, Varna district, during the Late Chalcolithic period (Nikolov 2012; cf. Bouzek 2005, 1).

Adopting a function-oriented approach which sees the town as an entity within a larger hierarchy of settlements, recent scholarship isolates certain function(s) of a place as primary for urban genesis (Popov 2002, 41–42, 172–174). Since its inception urban studies in Bulgaria has remained focused on analyzing data from large settlements, utilizing little of the potential offered by other methodologies (Domaradzki 1998, 15–43; cf. Popov 2002, 59–168; Dimitrov 2011, 8–19; Theodossiev 2011, 15–17; Balabanov 2012, 92–103). Integration of information generated through field surveys of the countryside, however, has opened new horizons for understanding urbanization. Attempts to extrapolate too much from surface scatters of pottery sherds, though, should be treated with caution (Sobotkova 2013). Despite the refinement of methodology, social change is framed in terms of contacts between Thracians and Greeks, attributed to diffusion of ideas or skills, but manifested as “Greek influence” in a local milieu or to the migration and movement of people (Vranić 2012, 31–36; Nankov 2008, 16–18; 2009, 270–273; 2012, 118–123). In any case, the culture-historical framework utilized for the study of urbanization can be boiled down to three interpretative paradigms: (1) the emergence of urban life sprouts out of the internal dynamic of Thracian society alone, irrespective of foreign agency; (2) it is triggered by contacts

through emulation of Greek practices, thereby becoming a byproduct of Hellenization; or, that (3) it presents an entirely foreign phenomenon brought into Thrace by external factors, such as Greeks, Macedonians, and Romans. Archibald (2004, 892) has brilliantly summed up these points by referring to the threefold meaning of the term polis when encountered in a non-Greek environment.

It is essential to point out at the outset that the study of urbanization owes much to the philological branch of Thracologists, headed by Prof. A. Fol, taking into account information about the existence of numerous Thracian poleis along the North Aegean coast since the sixth century BCE, mostly known from lexicographic compendia (Fol 1965, 315 n. 34). These, however, together with the Greek apoikiai on the west Black Sea coast, are the subject of separate inquiries (Chapter 19). The geographical scope of the present chapter is limited to: the Danubian plain nestled between the Danube River and Stara planina to the south; the plain of Upper Thrace, which borders the Stara planina to the north, the Rhodopes to the south, and the Black Sea to the east; and the territory between the Strymon and Nestos Rivers (regions C, D, and E following Fol 1965, 310; cf. Archibald 2010, 326–327; Theodossiev 2011, 2–4).

An inherent difficulty for Thracian studies in general stems from the fact that scholars have to deal with accounts left by outsiders, Greek and Roman authors, whose subjective bias is impossible to gauge. Adopting a historical-typological method, Prof. A. Fol (1965; cf. Koledarov 1966), for example, created the concept of royal cities formed around the aristocratic seat, *horion metropolis*, of Thracian rulers who controlled all means of production, including landed property. Based exclusively on literary sources, his abstract model of Thracian society and urbanism in particular, consisting of villages (*komai*), fortified places (*horia*), and royal cities (*tyrseis*), was informed by the discovery of Seuthopolis in the 1940s and 1950s, a small fortified compound in south central Bulgaria with Greek-style housing built on a grid pattern in Hellenistic fashion (Dimitrov and Chichikova 1978; Popov 2002, 122–134; Nankov 2008). The excavation director, Prof. D. P. Dimitrov (1958, 697–698), was the first to see the so-called citadel as a Hellenistic version of a residential tower (*tyrsis*) described by Xenophon while in the service of Seuthes II in 399 BCE (Anab. 7.2.21). Although much of this is now untenable on account of recent archaeological discoveries, the idea was recently resurrected by Chichikova (2009, 39–41), who argued that the citadel served as a royal palace, *basileia* (cf. Dimitrov 2009, 281–282). While putting together settlement typologies on the basis of archaeological criteria proved of limited value for the debate about urbanization, it has nonetheless thrown into sharp relief the need to lay greater emphasis on their function (Chichikova 1985, 87). A related question was that of continuity with later Roman towns, but in most cases this can be confined to topography alone (Popov 2005, 614).

The big issue, though, is how to reconcile the emerging image of Thrace as a centralized, territorial monarchy, derived exclusively from literary sources, with the long-established portrayal of Classical Greece as a polis-based society. Urbanization was thus viewed as a sign for Thrace entering what P. Delev (1998) has called a “Hellenistic condition.”

26.2 Setting the Agenda

Unlike Greece and even Macedonia, the polis was never the defining feature of community life in Thrace; since the time of Herodotus Thracians were better understood as a collection of different *ethne* (Archibald 2005, 9–10; [Chapter 3](#) above). Much of what we know about Thracian cities, however, derives from literary sources mentioning the establishment of Macedonian colonies such as Kabyle, Philippopolis, and Alexandropolis, to name a few (Archibald 2004, no. 652, 654–655; Adams 2007). The addition of the fortress Krakra near Pernik to the same category remains tentative, despite a recent reevaluation of its role within the settlement system of inland Thrace (Popov 2002, 135–142; 2008). What has always been at stake, certainly from the perspective of Bulgarian historiography, was the push to attribute the emergence of urban life to local factors while diminishing the role played by Macedonian expansion into Thrace from the reign of Philip II onwards (e.g., Gocheva 1986, 71–72; Balabanov 1986, 53–55). Western and Greek scholarship, on the other hand, has painted a more balanced picture, pointing to the explicit statement by Diodorus Siculus (16.71.2) that Philip, “αὐτὸς δ’ ἐν τοῖς ἐπικαίροις τόποις κτίσας ἀξιολόγους πόλεις ἔπαυσε τοῦ θράσου τοὺς Ὀρᾶκας” (Badian 1983, 66–71; Adams 1997, 85; Loukopoulou and Psoma 2007, 150–151; Loukopoulou 2011). Following Prof. G. Mihailov (1986, 15), more recent studies have recognized the importance of Macedonian agency for stimulating Thracian urban development (Delev 1998; Domaradzki 1998; Nankov 2008). In addition, Seuthopolis and Helis provide indisputable evidence that some level of urbanization was certainly achieved after the time of Philip II, no doubt by emulating Greek models but in the context of interaction with the Macedonians during the early Hellenistic period (Nankov 2008; Stoyanov 2006; Dimitrov 2011, 17).

Albeit derived exclusively from archaeology, information about an earlier horizon of fortified sites dated to the sixth and fifth centuries BCE does exist. For example, the sites near Koprivlen in the Middle Mesta valley, Vasil Levski on the Upper Stryama river and, more recently, Krastevich near Hisaria, have long ago raised the question for the emergence of Thracian urban centers well before the arrival of the Macedonians (Popov 2002, 60–76; see also [Chapter 9](#) above). The inclusion of the site near Vetren, municipality of Septemvri, commonly identified with emporion Pistiros, presents a special case in as much as it cannot be determined whether the term denotes an urban community (Demetriou 2012, 153–187; Archibald 2013, 58). Other cases that

have received popularity in the historiography on account of the substantial urban presence during the Roman period, such as Pautalia, Beroe, and Serdonpolis, have contributed nothing of substance to the urbanization debate (Popov 2005, 612–613). Little can be extracted from insufficiently published data about sites located on the west Black Sea coast, such as Tirizis, known to have housed the treasury of Lysimachus (Strabo 7.6.1), and the Thracian predecessor of the Roman colony of Deultum, attested as Dovelt on a retrograde graffito (Balkanska 1980; SEG 49.883). The existence of Thracian towns has also been presupposed on slender evidence derived from toponyms (e.g., Apros (Archibald 2004, no. 653), Beos, Ergiske, Geiston, and Sauthaba) inscribed on some of the silver vessels from the Rogozen treasure (SEG 37.618; Archibald 1998, 121, fig. 4.4, 225, 234). Since the mid-2000s, the outpouring of new archaeological sites in inland Thrace, such as the fortified compounds at Smilovene, Knyazhevo, Sinmorec (summaries in Balabanov 2012, 83–87; Khristov 2011, 183–189) and Kozi Gramadi (Khristov 2011–2012; Archibald 2013, 147–148), has enriched substantially the available data with the addition of previously unknown sites, the definition of whose role within the settlement system as a whole remains challenging.

Moving away from preconceived notions for urbanization, such as assigning ethnic labels or discerning state markers, the present survey purports to push the debate into a different direction through a critical discussion of literary, epigraphic, and archaeological data. Freed from the urge to devise all-embracing models for urbanization in Thrace, which became the hallmark of earlier scholarship, the challenge now is to identify a common thread within an often disparate and incomplete dataset. Let us begin with the Macedonian colonies.

26.3 Macedonian Colonies

Leaving aside the question of what label we should assign to the numerous foundations of Philip II and Alexander III (cf. Hammond and Griffith 1979, 554–566; Tacheva 1987, 133), it remains an indisputable fact that they present the most visible acts of establishing towns in Classical antiquity. Thrace is no exception. Ancient authors have left to us a handful of examples, Philippopolis, Kabyle, Drongylon, Masteira, Alexandropolis, to name just a few. Frontier zones, however, offer better data for analysis of this phenomenon. In addition, observations regarding Macedonian expansion are greatly aided by information available from written sources, inscriptions, numismatics, and archaeology.

The best starting point for our discussion is Plutarch's account about Alexander III's refoundation of a Maedian town in the Middle Strymon Valley (Alex. 9.1). Subduing local unrest in 340 BCE, Alexander drove away

the local inhabitants (Maedi), settled a mixed population, and renamed it Alexandropolis (Archibald 2004, no. 652; Cohen 1995, 82; Delev 1998). Despite Plutarch's remark, Adams (2007) has convincingly argued that such large-scale endeavors needed integration of local communities to be successful. Although very little is known about its archaeological layout (Mitrev 2012, 144–151), the (re)foundation of Alexandropolis can serve as a model for other cases about which we possess no specific details. A few years prior to the march of Alexander III in Medica, Heraclea Sintica, another Macedonian colony situated on the border between Medi and Sinti, located near the village of Rupite, municipality of Petrich, was perhaps founded in similar circumstances by Philip II shortly after his march against the “barbarians of Orbelia” (Polyaen. 4.12.6; Nankov forthcoming). While ample numismatic evidence points to a close association with the Macedonian kingdom, onomastic data from Hellenistic grave monuments testify to the exclusive presence of a stratum of Greek/Macedonian settlers (Dimitrov 2004, 215; Mitrev 2012, 101–115).

As is commonly agreed (Ellis 1969; Hatzopoulos 2011, 62–64), population transplants emerged as a main strategic tool utilized by the Macedonian administration not only in border regions but also in the heart of newly conquered territories. Some literary sources allude to this practice in connection with the establishment of Philippopolis and Kabyle, Macedonian colonies situated on the Hebros and Tonzos, the two major rivers in the Upper Thrace Valley (see list of primary sources in Archibald 2004, nos. 654–655). Toponyms such as Poneropolis and Moichopolis (Theopomp. Fr. 110; Strabo 7.6.2; Pliny, HN 4.11.4; Plut., Mor. 520b), occasionally attached to the former, should not be discarded as disparaging and devoid of meaning; rather, they would be more useful if taken as signifiers for the transplantation of unprivileged groups of people in a foreign environment. From their perspective, Macedonian administration appeared as beneficial because it provided them with an opportunity to acquire civic status based on landed property (Tacheva 2007, 591). Rather than focusing on the mechanism of mutual interaction between constituent entities, Bulgarian historiography has traditionally attributed very little importance to such analytical frameworks for the sake of arguing that these foundations only refurbished preexisting Thracian strongholds (e.g., Gocheva 1986, 65–70; Balabanov 2012, 98–100; Kisiov 2004, 37).

Recent archaeological data from Philippopolis and Kabyle, however, has increasingly lessened the possibility that Thracian antecedents were replaced by Macedonian colonies (Popov 2002, 110; Khandzhiiska and Lozanov 2010, 260–263). Although details concerning the original foundations by Philip II are available in neither case, the Macedonian character of these sites attains more visibility from archaeological and epigraphic data. For example, the conspicuous, first arrival of Thasian wine at Kabyle in 341 BCE, as was

recently shown by C. Tzochew (2009, 64, 67–68), should not be treated as accidental, but taken as another confirmation that Philip II founded Kabyle during his Thracian campaign in 342–341 BCE (Khandzhiiska and Lozanov 2010, 262). Not only does the association of these finds with the city walls remain tenuous, but the recent discovery of an artillery bastion on a hill adjacent to the main town may suggest that Kabyle was fortified in the early Hellenistic period (Nankov 2008, 36, table 5). In a recent overview article V. Khandzhiiska and I. Lozanov (2010, 260–263) have compellingly traced the historical trajectory of Kabyle, from the early years as a Macedonian colony administered by a royal official (epistates), perhaps appointed by Philip II himself, to its later development as an autonomous town with city magistrates and its own coinages. Although Philippopolis presents a less clear case, one that has recently been described as “a dispersed city” (cf. Archibald 2013, 68–69), two facts indisputably reveal its early history as a Macedonian foundation; the presence of *politarchai*, officials attested in the administration of Macedonian towns, and the naming of one of the city phylai [Philippeis], most likely after Philip II (Hatzopoulos 1984; Mari 2008, 241–242 n. 54). Finally, the idea of planting strongholds on and around isolated volcanic outcrops, located in proximity to major rivers, echoing Diodorus’ passage (Diod. 16.71.2) quoted above, may be responding to particular topographic conditions expected to be met by such military establishments. In addition to Philippi, Philippopolis, and Kabyle, one might add Heraclea Sintica, whose topographic layout closely resembles that of the other three (Domaradzki and Popov 2001, 134; Popov 2004, 15; Stoyanov 2006, 91; Nankov forthcoming).

26.4 Emporia

The idea that trading posts, known from literary sources and inscriptions as *emporia*, existed in Classical/Hellenistic Thrace is novel, in spite of scanty notices handed down through literary tradition. Although it seems to reassert the validity of the Hellenization paradigm, other interpretative models remain possible, as I discuss below. The emporion debate was brought to the forefront of Thracian studies in the late 1980s as an international team of scholars began to excavate a fortified site located at Adzhiyska vodenitsa near the village of Vetren, municipality of Septemvri, and especially after the discovery of the so-called Pistiros Inscription in 1990 (for excavation results to date, see Bouzek et al. 2013). Since then imagining Thracian–Greek trade contacts has gained currency among scholars in Bulgaria and abroad (Archibald 2004, no. 656). Although identification of the site with the emporion Pistiros mentioned in the inscription has not gone unchallenged (Tsetskhladze 2000, 2011; see summary in Demetriou 2012, 158–159 n. 22), not only has the idea of Greek emporia in Thrace persisted, but it grew more popular with the discovery of the site near Krastevich, municipality of Hisaria (summary in Archibald 2013, 235–237, figs. 5.5–5.6; cf. [Chapter 27](#) below).

The case of Pistiros is instructive for several reasons. First, the administrative status of the site remains uncertain, although it has been assumed on shaky grounds that it functioned as a polis (Archibald 2004, 895; cf. Tsetschladze 2011, 20). Second, based on the Pistiros Inscription, in addition to the numerous Greek graffiti scratched on pottery sherds, it has been argued that the site was “a multiethnic emporion” comprised of mixed population, both Thracian and Greek (Demetriou 2012, 186; Nankov 2012, 111–112 n. 15). A reasonable yet unsubstantiated link can be posited between Pistiros and an unnamed town, the *politai* of which have honored an unspecified Thracian and his brothers during each fair (*panagyris*) in the early Hellenistic period (IGBulg 3.1, 1114; Archibald 2004, 886; Tacheva 2007, 592 n. 26).

Perhaps one of the most compelling narratives about the nature of the site has been offered by the late Prof. M. Tacheva (2007, 588–595). Starting with the hypothesis proposed by the excavation director, M. Domaradzki, before the discovery of the Pistiros Inscription in 1990, that the site was an Odrysian fortified royal residence (see Tsetschladze 2000; 2011), and endorsing K. Boshnakov’s (1999, 319) equation of Pistiros with Mastaira, known as one of the colonies established in Thrace by Philip II (Dem. 8.44), she went on to show that Pistiros underwent significant changes, in terms of its economic status, after the Macedonian conquest with the resettlement of a Greek population (*oiketores*, line 38) in Pistiros from Apollonia and *emporion* in the Thasian *peraia* on the North Aegean coast (Tacheva 2007, 591 n. 21; Demetriou 2012, 184). Similar practices are attested at Kabyle during the Roman period. A dedicatory inscription dated to 144 CE by some “Greeks residing in Kabyle” (Ἕλληνες οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν Καβύλῃ) demonstrates a pattern of town organization, within which the role of foreign craftsmen was also prominent (Lozanov 2004, 303). To return to Pistiros, the development of crafts and burgeoning trade operations facilitated by the arrival of a non-Thracian population signaled the emergence of urbanization in Weberian terms (cf. Osborne 2005, 5; Tacheva 1987, 135). Thus Pistiros can serve as the most illuminating example of Thrace’s integration into the Hellenistic world (Tacheva 2007, 593), or entering the “Hellenistic condition” as Delev (1998) has put it. A recent reading of the Pistiros Inscription has offered new insights into the identity of the issuing authority, which may not necessarily be linked with an Odrysian ruler, as traditionally assumed (Graninger 2012, 109; cf. Tacheva 2007, 593–594; Hatzopoulos 2012, 14–15). In sum, if Tacheva’s model is valid, one need not strive to reconcile the competing views about the site identification; far from being mutually exclusive, they rather demonstrate the fluidity of settlement forms in Thrace, especially following the years of Macedonian expansion.

26.5 Royal Cities

The fortuitous discovery of Seuthopolis through salvage excavations has

secured its fundamental place in the urbanization debate since the late 1950s (Dimitrov 1958; Dimitrov and Chichikova 1978; Domaradzki 1998, 39–43; Popov 2002, 122–134). The toponym remains unattested in the literary sources, and the identification comes from the so-called Great Inscription uncovered in the citadel (SEG 52.661, lines 31–32; Cohen 1995, 87–88; Archibald 2004, no. 657). I would argue, however, that it is perhaps the least useful example to highlight the essential features of what can be called a “Thracian city,” even less so a “royal city” (Fol 1965, 316; cf. Balabanov 2012, 102–103). It was certainly among the most short-lived (Nankov 2008, 42).

First, it is important to begin with a few observations regarding chronology. Recent studies on Thasian amphora stamps, in conjunction with reevaluation of city fortifications, Macedonian coins, and Attic pottery from the site, have shown beyond doubt that Seuthopolis was an early Hellenistic foundation dated to 315–300 BCE, thus emerging on the ground a generation after the conquest of Thrace by Philip II in late 340s BCE (Nankov 2008, 42–44). What this leads to is an obligation to interpret its functional traits against the background of the years following the death of Alexander III in 323 BCE and, more importantly, after Thracian military men returned home from his Asian campaign (Nankov 2008, 44–48; 2012, 121 n. 64). Certain artifacts (graffiti, styli, and metal rings) seem to suggest that the inhabitants of Seuthopolis, who appear as literate, contrary to earlier claims that only the royal administration was bilingual, might have belonged to different ethne (Nankov 2012, 120–121, figs. 6–9, 20; Stoyanov 2006, 87; Dimitrov 2009, 282–283). Second, ever since its discovery, the orthogonal planning of Seuthopolis has been attributed to the Hippodamian tradition of Greek urban planning. Recent studies have shown, however, that this model produces unsatisfactory results when it comes to understanding the planning of new cities from the Hellenistic period (Greco 2009, 108, 116–117). As I have argued elsewhere (Nankov 2012, 44, fig. 25), Seuthopolis was in dialogue not with Classical urban traditions, but with new trends in early Hellenistic military architecture, as were other closely comparable towns in Macedonia and Thessaly (e.g., Dion, Halos, and Goritsa) built in accordance with the so-called *tetragonon schema* (cf. Hellmann 2010, 207). Military concerns seem to have outweighed other considerations.

Another stumbling block to interpreting Seuthopolis is its small size of 5 ha. While previous estimates suggest a population figure consisting of 40–60 families (Tacheva 1987, 141; Nikolov 1982, 87), Sobotkova (2013, 137 n. 43) has recently argued for 500–1000 inhabitants. By way of comparison, Macedonian garrisons since the reign of Philip II numbered up to 2000 men (e.g., Theopomp. Fr. 110; Livy 32.15.1). The modest number of people that the town can sustain becomes less puzzling when combined with the observation that excavations have retrieved no evidence for production

(Tacheva 1987, 140–141). Craftsmen quarters can be expected, though, but outside the fortification walls, as recently observed (Stoyanov 2006, 85). Existence of everyday transactions for the purchase of foodstuffs can be deduced from a busy pattern of coin distribution on the public square, attested as an agora in the Seuthopolis inscription (SEG 52.661; [Chapter 27, Figure 27.1](#) below). Field surveys in the immediate hinterland of Seuthopolis have documented quite a diverse network of habitation sites of less permanent nature, underlying the exceptional role of the town within the settlement system as a whole (Sobotkova 2013, 138–140, fig. 3). Such observations seem to tip the scales of scholarly discussion with regard to its function in favor of it being a “residential town of consumers” (Tacheva 1987, 143). The key to Seuthopolis is to realize that one is dealing with acts of emulation and aspiration to becoming/turning into something that Thrace was not. It would seem that Seuthes III, perhaps a Thracian of royal descent, who might have participated in Alexander III’s campaigns (Loukopoulou 2011, 471–472; Nankov 2012, 121 n. 66), built a permanent administrative camp/seat for himself and his closest associates modeled on the multitude of city foundations established by Alexander III’s Successors. His military background becomes apparent through the issue of his own coinage, the use of Greek as the official language of administration, naming the “town” after himself in a manner befitting royalty, utilizing Greek-style housing, and offering settlement for various groups other than Thracians. It would seem more likely to assume that inhabitants consisted of retired soldiers who were given land around Seuthopolis in which to settle as colonists. Land appears as the most valued property securing participation in the community, which superficially fashioned itself like a functioning Greek polis, as is evident from the formulaic language adopted in the Seuthopolis inscription (SEG 52.661; Hatzopoulos 2002, 269–270). In sum, Seuthopolis can be defined as an ephemeral product of the military ambitions of Seuthes III, a creation that clearly emulates foreign practices while challenging traditional assumptions about the outlook of Classical poleis in non-Greek environments.

The fortified settlement near Sboryanovo, commonly identified with Helis, situated beyond Stara planina in the land of the Getae, merits our attention for several reasons. To begin with, aside from being contemporary with Seuthopolis, its architectural footprint appears to be more substantial and displays various features of what can be defined as the political and economic power base of the Getic ruler Dromichaetes (Stoyanov et al. 2006, 20–24; Diod. 21.12.2–5; Strabo 7.3.14). Archaeological finds of imported pottery, Greek amphorae, and metal items, as well as evidence of craftsmen quarters, have painted the image of a large, vibrant, and well-connected community (Stoyanov et al. 2006, 24–39, fig. 42). What deserves further attention, though, if one accepts the proposed historical identification, is that Helis is identified as a polis (Diod. 21.12.2–5). While curiously the town did not make it into the thin selection of Thracian poleis compiled by the Copenhagen Polis

Center (Archibald 2004, 892–896), it was quite justifiably treated together with Seuthopolis and Kabyle as a site providing a different model of urbanization in Thrace (Stoyanov 2006, 81–83).

Despite other literary data indicating early contacts of the Getic rulers with Philip II, archaeology suggests that the site came into being during the early Hellenistic period, well after the Macedonian expansion into Thrace in the 340s (Archibald 1998, 237; Delev 2000, 395 nn. 63–64; Stoyanov et al. 2006, 20). The capture of Lysimachus by Dromichaetes dated to the 290s BCE inevitably points to the conclusion that by this time Helis was already an established center in the region. The overall impression is one of a significant Getic center, whose physical layout and perhaps internal organization, reminded an outside observer of a Greek polis (cf. Archibald 2004, 892). Arguably, we may have a singular example of a Getic urban community that took off on its own, irrespective of external factors such as the Macedonian expansion of Philip II and the military appetites of Lysimachus (Delev 2000, 396–401; Popov 2002, 164–165). Whether it can be defined as “royal city” in a Folian sense at this point remains uncertain. Reality, however, is seldom black and white, as is evident from a very intriguing dedicatory inscription discovered in close proximity to the city gate during the excavations in the 1980s. Earlier views leaning on the Greek origins of the dedicator, a certain Menecharmos, son of Poseidonios (LGPN IV, s.v.), who dedicated a statue to Phosphoros, a frequent epithet of Artemis, admit of the possibility that he was a merchant from Odessos or some other colony on the Black Sea, involved in trade operations with Helis (Chichikova, Delev, and Bozhkova 1992, 78, figs. 7–8). It is far more likely, however, that along with the scratched names on pottery this singular epigraphic document from the site should be taken to illustrate the presence of a non-Greek population (Stoyanov 2006 et al. 52–53).

26.6 Tyrseis and Country Estates

A set of new archaeological discoveries necessitates a reassessment of the theoretical model postulating an evolutionary link between royal residences (basileia, tyrseis), attested in some literary sources, and the emergence of royal cities in the Hellenistic period (Dimitrov 1958; Khristov 2011, 180–183). Although the idea for a preexisting tyrsis at Seuthopolis is no longer valid (Popov 2002, 123; Nankov 2008, 43), it has come back to life since Bulgarian archaeologists have recently uncovered several fortified compounds which can be broadly conceived of as residential complexes or country estates (Balabanov 2012, 83–87; Archibald 2013, 147–148). The most notable example, Kozi Gramadi site, situated on a peak (1115 m) in the Sredna Gora mountains, deserves special attention, not least because of the prompt publication of the excavation results (Khristov 2011–2012).

The site, which boasts a monumental building executed in ashlar masonry, along with storage facilities and a series of sheds built of less durable materials, has been interpreted as an Odrysian fortified residence, even as a “princely hunting lodge” (Archibald 2013, 147), associated with Amadokos II and Teres II (Khristov 2012, 17; Khristov 2011, 180–189). An upcoming volume on the latest excavation campaign will certainly refine such labels. What is more significant, and with remarkable implications for the study of urbanization, in particular, is the surprising discovery of sling bullets inscribed with the names of Kleoboulos and Anaxandros – two Macedonian generals on staff in the army of Philip II more famously known from the siege of Olynthus in 348 BCE (Lee 2001, 13, figs. 3–4). Let us be aware that no other site in Thrace can be linked beyond doubt with the Macedonian conquest through both archaeological and epigraphic data. Khristov has already argued with confidence on the basis of destruction debris, coins, and military artifacts that Philip II captured the compound during his Thracian campaign in 342–341 BCE (Khristov and Manov 2011, 119–132; Khristov 2012, 79–89). Observing the distribution pattern of sling bullets, Khristov (2012, 83–87) even contended that “urban combat” had taken place on site following in a very superficial way a concept developed by John W. I. Lee on the basis of Olynthus (Lee 2001). It remains to be explained, however, what was the nature of the site occupation during the period after the arrival of the Macedonians, which the excavator has singled out as “post-residential” (Khristov 2012, 17). This is profoundly important because Kozi Gramadi is in a unique position to furnish invaluable evidence for the transformation, if any, of a Thracian habitation site following the Macedonian expansion. Although at this point it is difficult to assign archaeological data to the post-residential period, the large number of Macedonian royal bronzes, whose circulation in Thrace is normally attributed to the military presence of Macedonian troops reported in the literary sources (Psoma 2009, 12–15; Nankov 2009), retrieved from another fortified compound, located on Kozi Gramadi peak (1364 m) points to a certain level of early Hellenistic occupation of the area (Khristov 2011, 13–45, 91–101).

Several observations immediately follow from the case of Kozi Gramadi. First, not all settlements in Thrace captured by Philip II underwent subsequent development as colonies. Despite the conjecture that it could have housed the royal treasury (Khristov and Stoyanova 2011, 100) the site was apparently not recognized by the Macedonians as an *ἐπικαίρος τόπος* (Diod. 16.71.2). Second, at least since the early fourth century BCE the Thracian elite seemed to have preferred to occupy elevated ground in close proximity to natural resources and fertile valleys. Kozi Gramadi is not an isolated example, since other sites fit into the same pattern, specifically the low foothills of Sredna Gora near Kabyle (Topolchane, Krushare, and Kaloyanovo) and Strelcha (Smilovene, see [Chapter 9](#) above). The idea that these mountainous estates belonged to Thracian chiefs has recently emerged as a plausible possibility

allowing us to better understand the relationship between the preexisting position of Thracian landlords and the establishment of the Macedonian colonists in Kabyle (Khandzhiiska and Lozanov 2010, 262). That these Thracian domains have informed the Greek perception of terms such as *tyrsis*, *hestiatorion*, *basileion* is plausible, yet it remains impossible to prove. Our hope is that future discoveries will bring to light more definitive evidence providing further insights into the archaeological blueprint of these Thracian sites for which the application of the urbanization paradigm carries no weight.

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Press. Contains essential discussion of the various changes occurring in Greek cities during the post-Classical period.

Chapter 27

Trade

Chavdar Tzochev

27.1 Early Iron Age Contacts

Scholars writing on the Early Iron Age Balkans¹ often use the words “contacts” or “interactions” to explain similarities in the material culture in different regions, or rather to avoid explaining them, for which purpose the obscurity of these terms is suitable. Doing so is fully justified by the paucity and ambiguity of the evidence for exchange in this period. Thracian metalwork and pottery show undeniable relations with other communities in the Balkans, Asia Minor, and the Aegean (e.g., Stoyanov 1997, 74–82; Nikov 2000), but the direction and nature of these relations remain vague. The general impression is of craftsmen who communicate by exchanging know-how and design rather than by reproducing imported prototypes.

There are very few explicitly imported objects in the interior of Thrace before the late sixth century.² Examples of Greek metalwork found deep in the mainland may have resulted from “commercial contacts of the local dynasts” (Theodossiev 2000, 92), but their rare occurrence highlights other possibilities, such as diplomatic gifts or traveling craftsmen. A recent study of pottery from Koprivlen has put forward that the Middle Nestos valley “was integrated in the process of commercial exchange current in the Aegean region as early as the second half of the 8th or the beginning of the 7th century” (Bozkova 2005, 89). The same questionable equation between pottery and trade is often employed in the debate about pre-colonial contacts of the Thracian littorals. Pottery technology also traveled, which is no less significant than the trade of manufactured pots. While the Aegean-looking designs of the metal ornaments may have been adopted through observation of prototypes, the adoption of new potting technology also requires knowledge, which implies the mobility of specialists.

There are various possible forms of mobility, apart from the previously mentioned model of the traveling craftsman. Transhumant populations migrating seasonally between the Rhodope Mountains and northern Greece is one of these alternatives (Baralis and Riapov 2007, 65). Pilgrimage is another option that would well explain the appearance of Thracian-looking bronze figurines at panhellenic sanctuaries (Karadzhinov 2011, 8). One can easily imagine reciprocal movements resulting from returning pilgrims or even foreigners attracted to Thracian sanctuaries, some of which were famous in the Greek world (Hdt. 7.111). This kind of religious tourism may have

produced some of the rare, long-distance imports found in the Rhodope Mountains, or the Aeolian wares in the pre-Hellenic sanctuaries of Aegean Thrace (Ilieva 2007, 214–215). The paucity of archaeological data for trade in Early Iron Age Thrace actually has a positive side: it helps us to focus on the non-commercial aspects of interregional networks, which the overemphasized archaeological evidence for trade makes difficult for later periods.

27.2 Colonization and Trade

Two popular themes in studies of Greek colonization are the role of trade opportunities as a stimulus for colonization and the economic character of the newly founded settlements (for a review of the discussion, see Petropoulos 2005, 6–13). Recent writings present the colonization of Thrace in contrasting light: the Greeks who headed for the Black Sea are thought to have been driven away from their homelands by unfavorable political and demographic conditions (Tsatskheladze 2005, 229), while those who colonized the northern Aegean littoral are seen competing for the “Thracian eldorado” (Loukopoulou 2007). Without going to extremes, one can safely allow that the pursuit of overseas gain did exist, even more so in the case of Thrace, where colonization started generations later than in the western Mediterranean. From the early eighth to the mid-seventh century, Greeks had many opportunities to realize the advantages of seaborne trade, a fact seen in the significant increase in long-distance imports across the Mediterranean, as well as in the works of Homer and Hesiod (Osborne 1996, 41–42; Starr 2008, 426). Greeks were definitely aware of the commercial advantages of the places they chose to settle: pre-colonial contacts may not have produced a significant exchange of objects, but they did allow information to travel. The opinion that trade was not a priority in the initial stage, when colonists had to deal with the difficulties of survival, fails at one point: trade was an essential part of survival, since a secure level of self-sufficiency was unachievable before the establishment of a rural *chora*. Neither of the two extreme views – of either a fully agricultural or a fully mercantile character for the colonies – is easy to imagine.

In order to survive, the colonists needed agricultural produce and resources, the closest providers of which were the local people. In conformity with an often cited model, the early exchange between Greeks and Thracians is imagined as aristocratic gift exchange in which luxury goods are reciprocally given without being considered merchandise (Avram 1996, 248). This theoretical concept is hard to observe in practice, since the motives for exchange do not leave traces in the archaeological record. Frequent and bulky imports found in settlements are more likely to represent traded commodities than unique luxury items found in tombs, but this certainly is not a rule. It also requires a practical definition of “luxury,” which is itself a problem, since the social value of objects is relative – once a luxury, a commodity may lose its

status as prestige marker if spread largely (Hodos 2006, 8–9). A Milesian table-amphora found in an elite burial mound near the town of Karnobat (Georgieva and Nikov 2010, 149, fig. 4), some 60 km from Apollonia, represents one of the earliest pieces of evidence for direct contact between Greeks and locals in Pontic Thrace. If taken alone, this find would rank as an example par excellence for aristocratic gift-exchange between colonists and locals. But some years after its discovery excavations at a nearby settlement revealed quantities of Archaic, East Greek sherds (Tzochiev 2011), making it unlikely that this type of pottery was restricted to the elite. This case can serve not only as a reminder of how fragmented the evidence for the earliest exchange is, but also as a warning that this exchange may have been more practical than usually thought.

The boundaries between giving and trading in ancient societies could be blurry, and not only from a modern point of view. Both practices are closely related in the sense that exchange of gifts was an essential prerequisite for establishing commercial relations or initiating particular deals. Actions of diplomacy may naturally proceed to trade, or the former could be an integral part of the latter. One can dramatize the difference, but it seems more fruitful to focus on the outcome. With or without initial diplomacy, Greek colonization connected Thrace to a wide range of existing Mediterranean networks. Although this was not felt immediately, it brought decisive long-term consequences for Thracian societies and economies.

27.3 The Royal Economy

Few authors have attempted to produce a broader view of the Thracian economy. Literature on the subject is dominated by a theory developed by the Bulgarian Thracology School and referred to simply as the “royal economy” (Fol 1972, 124; 1990, 87–88; Fol et al. 2000, 134, 138, 139, 143; Tacheva 1987, 97ff.; 2002). The Thracologists’ model presents the economy of Odrysian and Hellenistic Thrace as a centralized monopoly in which the king is the ultimate owner of all means of production and initiator of all economic actions. Tribute extracted in kind from his Thracian subjects and in money from Greek neighbors formed the royal revenue, along with monopolized trade. The central authority took a leading role in foreign commerce, as the only possible mediator between the Thracian peasantry and Greek traders. The “royal economy” was exclusively rural: production and trade were not concentrated in urban settlements; in the interior of Thrace the latter took the form of royal residences. Surplus produce was gathered at locations near these residences and then shipped to coastal markets to be converted into cash. Internal trade was insignificant and non-monetized. Traders and craftsmen were not independent, but embedded within the royal economy.

The model described above presents an underdeveloped, socially embedded

economy and is essentially primitivist, though at variance with its contemporary western neo-primitivism. To be properly understood, the “royal economy” should not be detached from the underlying concept of a twofold Thracian society and the political ideology of its time. In the early 1970s, when Moses Finley was writing *The Ancient Economy*, his colleagues east of the Iron Curtain were preoccupied with the struggle of classes in ancient society. Hence in Bulgarian historiography the Thracian economy was seen as a superstructure of a feudal-like society composed of a hereditary aristocracy and an oppressed peasantry, the first violently appropriating the produce of the latter. While the Finleyan economy suffered from fragmentation, social embeddedness, and the pursuit of self-sufficiency, the Thracologists’ economy remained primitive because the aristocracy appropriated all resources, thus impeding development (repeated until recently in Tacheva 2006, 179–180).

Although its ideological background was largely abandoned, the essence of the “royal economy” concept has rarely been confronted. Criticism of the twofold structure of Thracian society and the lack of urban production and trade (Popov 2002, 57) was followed by a somewhat simplistic attempt to reconcile this model with the growing body of incompatible data. Tacheva (2006, 180) suggested that the “royal economy” should be confined to the time before the establishment of Macedonian power in Thrace; after this shift of political power the Odrysian kings lost their ability to appropriate the peasantry’s surplus produce, the binary social model was disrupted by the emergence of a middle class of traders and craftsmen, and the economy became more market-oriented. Dimitrov (2011) chose a different approach in envisioning a developed market-based exchange within a unified and centralized Odrysian economy under total royal control – a coexistence of autonomous polis-type communities along with cities that were the absolute property of the king. For Dimitrov the Odrysian economy did not change in essence with the Macedonian conquest, but only became more centralized and monopolized.

At present the Thracian “royal economy” is far from a clear concept; it covers a wide range of understandings, often mixed in a contradictory way. On one end is a perspective suitable for primitive communities with emerging social-differentiation. It imagines a centralized redistributive system in which the local leaders appropriate the surplus products of the whole community for exchange with the outside world – an old-fashioned model applied to western and northern European societies that entered into contact with either Greek or Roman civilization (Whitehouse and Wilkins 1989, 119–120). In studies of European prehistory, monopolization of foreign trade is explained as an ambition of leaders to restrict access to imported goods that served as prestige markers (Pydyn 1999, 17). The economies that formed the Odrysian kingdom probably went through this stage at a certain point in their development, but it is very unlikely that such a primitive structure had been retained for long.

Applied in general to pre-Roman, or even to pre-Macedonian Thrace, the idea appears static, simplistic, and retrograde.

On the other end is the perspective of a dualistic economy, created through fertilizing a centralized, gift-centered “economy of the eastern type” with market-oriented, polis-type practices (Dimitrov 2011, 7). The product resembles a command economy of the type often discussed in relation to the empires of the Successors; in this sense the Odrysian kingdom has been portrayed as a forerunner of the Hellenistic monarchies. This second perspective is more adequate, but it draws on general models and is very shortsighted when it comes to the details. An “economy of the eastern type” is nonsense in view of the variety of economic practices and structures within the Achaemenid empire. The relations between royal authority, civic bodies, and private actors in the Seleucid and Ptolemaic economies are sophisticated, and modern scholarship has given up the idea of simplifying them into a tidy model. Macedonia before Philip II is an essential example of coexistence of royal and urban economies, but is also very complex and hardly heuristic.

The paucity of written evidence has impeded similar discussions about the Odrysian kingdom and created an environment for simplifications, which the constantly swelling archaeological evidence refuses to fit. Thinking of the Odrysian kingdom or Thrace under Macedonian rule as a single, unified economy is one of these simplifications. It hardly makes sense with the amalgamation of tribal and urban communities whose relations and degree of dependence on the central authority varied with the fluctuations of this authority’s strength. The flourishing of trade by no means indicates unification and centralization (pace Dimitrov 2011, 7, 11), as diversity and fragmentation do not impede, but stimulate exchange. The idea of monopolized trade is a second simplification. The monopoly characteristic of the Thracian “royal economy” is emphasized in all mentioned studies, but is either absolutized or not discussed in detail. Ancient economies employed a variety of monopoly-like practices, which are not in opposition to a market-oriented economy, but an essential part of it (Gabrielsen 2011). It is possible that the Odrysian kings endorsed general commercial policies, strategic partners, and the principal conditions of trade (IGBulg 5, 5557 ter; Chankowski and Domaradzka 1999, 248–249) – a practice that has its contemporary parallels elsewhere (e.g., in Macedonia: see Hatzopoulos 1996, app. 1). Direct royal participation in the economy is also likely: the Odrysian kings would probably have been the largest producers and exporters in key domains. This does not contradict parallel market exchanges ruled by demand and supply, however. That this type of exchange existed at least as early as the end of the fifth century is strongly suggested by the archaeological evidence summarized in the rest of this chapter. A third simplification is seeing the market-oriented economic practices and structures in Thrace exclusively as Greek. Such a view is encouraged both by the biased textual record and by archaeology, which

recognizes as objects of trade only long-distance imports, remaining unaware of the exchange of locally produced commodities.

27.4 Marketplaces

The idea that Thracian cities were deprived of economic functions was largely abandoned after a number of urban sites produced explicit archaeological evidence for production and trade (cf. Popov 2002). The evidence for trade in most cases consists of coins and imported objects that confirm the existence of exchange and provide a taste of its dynamics and orientation on a broader scale, but hardly produce any idea of its organization. Few actual marketplaces are known and little attention has been paid to the instruments of trade.

Both Seuthopolis and Kabyle had agorai, where official decrees were exhibited in public (SEG 42.661). The agora of Seuthopolis is an open square in which only an altar and a statue base have survived. It has been argued that this agora was not a marketplace, but had exclusively political and religious functions (Chichikova 1983, 294) – an interpretation in the vein of the “royal economy” theory, as well as of the idealistic views of Xenophon (Cyr. 1.2.3) and Aristotle (Pol. 7.1331a24–36). The concentration of coin finds in the square and in its surrounding buildings ([Figure 27.1](#)), however, particularly of bronze coins destined for small transactions, indicates a retail marketplace. The agora of Kabyle has not yet been located,³ but the city certainly had an administratively regulated market: a third-century standard of measure for the sale of liquids⁴ marked Καβυλῆνων (“of the people of Kabyle”) suggests that a civic body controlled retail trade.



Figure 27.1 Coin findspots in Seuthopolis. This area of ca. 5 ha, which was inhabited only for some 50 years, yielded over 1300 coins, mostly bronze change destined for everyday transactions.

Source: mapped by Chavdar Tzochet according to the coordinates published in Dimitrov 1984.

Although both Kabyle and Seuthopolis date to after the Macedonian conquest of Thrace, there is an indirect indication that urban marketplaces existed earlier. A lead weight marked with a relief astragalos – a standard Greek device for the weight of a stater – found in the fifth-century settlement at Krastevich ([Figure 27.2](#)) indicates the existence of a regulated marketplace in the heart of the Odrysian kingdom long before Kabyle's foundation. The character of this settlement is not clear yet, as little has been published. But the presence of market instruments along with foreign coins and transport amphorae, combined with large warehouse-like buildings and the lack of any fortifications, promotes an idea that has nearly obsessed archaeologists working in Thrace during the last two decades.



Figure 27.2 Lead weight from the site of Krastevich. The astragalos symbol marks a standard unit of one stater.

Photo by Chavdar Tzochnev.

The idea that Greek trading-posts existed not only in coastal areas, but also in the deeper interior of Thrace, became popular after a sensational stone inscription was found in the upper Hebros valley in 1990. The inscription (IGBulg 5, 5557 ter), tentatively dated to the mid-fourth century, represents an edict or a contract that sets the rights of Greek traders resident in a settlement called Pistiros, as well as in other settlements called emporia. The main clauses in the document are meant to provide protection for the lives, property, and sovereignty of the Greeks, but the text is of particular interest because it offers insights into the organization of trade. The inscription tells us of a trade network operated by permanent Greek settlements and marketplaces, which existed in an area populated by Thracians. This network was not a venture of a single Greek polis, but was open to traders of different citizenship, who imported as well as exported goods to and from the coastal cities. The traders of one city, Maroneia, were privileged by being granted tax exemption. If the suggestion that the document was issued by an Odrysian authority is correct, then this authority did not participate directly in the exchange and did not protect its own interests in particular commodities; it only provided security for the Greeks, which one assumes was paid for by taxes on the traffic of goods.

Although the inscription is clear that Thracians and Greek traders coexisted for the sake of mutual interest, it is not so explicit on the location of the trade network it describes. This point has become the focus of a fierce debate. The majority of scholars accept that Pistiros and the emporia mentioned in the decree are to be found in the Hebros valley. The site of Adzhiyska Vodenitza, located several kilometers from the inscription's findspot, is identified either with Pistiros (Velkov and Domaradzka 1996), or with one of the mentioned emporia (Chankowski 2010, 245). Hansen (2006, 14) stresses that this interpretation creates an unparalleled case in the ancient Greek world – an inland emporion not connected to a major waterway. The challenge becomes even larger, if one tries to imagine the multiple emporia from the inscription operating in the area. Such sites have been sought out at various locations with favorable setting and evidence for imports (Bouzek and Domaradzka 2002).

A completely different scenario exists, however. In accordance with the common Greek practice of recording official documents in multiple copies, one for each party concerned, the inscription from Vetren could conceivably be the copy for the Thracian side (Demetriou 2010, 90; for another instance of this practice in Thrace see SEG 42.661). In this case Pistiros, as well as the emporia, might be located elsewhere, with the most logical place being in Aegean Thrace. Indeed, a settlement named Pistyros existed not far from the Aegean coast, in the area facing Thasos (Hdt. 7.109–110). As Denise Demetriou (2010) showed, the text of the inscription does make sense in the context of a north Aegean trade network. But even so, the conclusions discussed above will remain valid, and the possibility of Greek trading posts in the Thracian plain will continue to be controversial.

This debate over the location of the Pistiros network has an archaeological dimension, which is strongly delineated by the aforementioned views on the inscription and generally confined to two options: the site of Adzhiyska Vodenitza is regarded either as a Greek emporion or as an Odrysian royal residence. In a search for clues, scholars have tried to make sense of the evidence for a Greek presence at the site, the quantity and variety of imports, and the data for agricultural activity in the surrounding area. All of these approaches produced valuable conclusions, but they ultimately met the same obstacle: we are dealing with data from only a small surviving sector of a single site and do not have a comparable dataset from other sites in the Thracian plain. Furthermore, we do not even know what a Greek trading-post in the interior of Thrace would look like in the archaeological record, nor do we have trustworthy examples of Thracian royal residences. Greek presence, trade activity, and the lack of a developed chora are conceivable in both cases.

In addition to permanent urban markets and emporia, another option has often been suggested, although it remains theoretical and is not based on substantial evidence. The idea of periodic rural markets emerged from another inscription

found in the upper Hebros valley, near the village of Batkun (IGBulg 3.1, 1114), of early Hellenistic date, which records a festival (πανήγυρις) in honor of Apollo. This has been interpreted as an indication of a periodic fair (Velkov 1977, 173 n. 678; Domaradzki 1995, 24; 1998, 18), but the proposition remains tentative. As de Ligt (1993, 35–39) has rightly stated, the word πανήγυρις in the Greek sources is steadily used in the sense of religious festival and does not necessarily entail a concomitant market. Nevertheless, such gatherings of people were favorable environments for the development of commerce and the inscription is valuable for suggesting a line of research that deserves further exploration. Periodic rural markets are easy to imagine in ancient Thrace: such are typical for agrarian economies characterized by relatively low demand, underdeveloped infrastructure, and political instability (de Ligt 1993, 6–13 with a summary of previous scholarship). The wide range of possible characteristics for periodic markets provides various applicable solutions: on one end are markets with local significance, organized at short intervals in the vicinity of major settlements and facilitating the flow of rural produce from the hinterland to the urban milieu; on the other are low-frequency interregional markets, organized at a large distance from urban centers and specializing in high-value commodities. Even if the urbanization of ancient Thrace proves to have been underestimated, cyclically organized rural markets remain a plausible model to explain the integration of vast areas into networks that allow the flow of commodities. The archaeological identification of these markets remains a challenge, since they are unlikely to have left traces of substantial structures. Instead, one should look for concentrations of buried deposits resulting from short-term dwelling, trade, and consumption, which, taken as whole, span significant time-periods. Fields with such deposits are often excavated in Thrace, but are usually rashly interpreted as “pit sanctuaries” (see [Chapter 11](#)).

27.5 Monetization

Recent opinion describes Thrace as a “region with very limited monetary production of its own, where silver was treated rather as bullion than as coinage” (Kremydi 2011, 170). Ironically, Thrace has provided perhaps the most explicit cases of unminted silver treated as coinage – two silver jugs inscribed with the monetary equivalent of their weight in tetradrachms (Manov 2006). These objects demonstrate the degree to which the Thracians of the late fourth century were thinking of their wealth in terms of coined money.

This vessel-money has a centuries-long background. The earliest coinages produced in Thrace date to the late sixth century. Silver from the area of the lower reaches of the Axios, Strymon, and Nestos Rivers was minted by north Aegean cities, as well as local tribes. This coinage is remarkable for three reasons: the predominance of unusually heavy coins; the common design and

iconography of the types; and the peculiar distribution pattern – almost complete absence in the area of production, contrasted with an abundance of finds, treasured as bullion metal, in the territory of the Achaemenid empire. Such peculiarities have stimulated a lengthy debate over the function of the coinages in question. Those who think that it served for tribute payments to the Persian king find strong support in: the distribution pattern; the heavy weight, which is unsuitable for market exchange; the chronology of the phenomenon, which generally coincides with Persian military presence in Thrace; and the shared iconography, which denotes a joint response to political events (Kraay 1976, 139). More recently, however, many scholars favor a commercial purpose for the Thraco-Macedonian coinage. Price (1987, 43–44) suggests that the metal itself was an object of large-scale interregional trade, stressing the sharp increase of coinages in the Aegean and the demand for silver in the Achaemenid empire and Magna Graecia. Hence the coinage was intended for export and not for use in the local economy, which was too primitive (Murray 1993, 239). Smith (1999) successfully challenges this theory when he argues that the north Aegean coinages are media for exchange and reflect the monetization of the local economy. Indeed, the two theories do not contradict each other; we know now that some of the Thraco-Macedonian coinages had developed systems of small denominations destined for marketplace transactions, along with the heavy coins that were internationally recognized and particularly profitable for export (Kroll 2011).

A process of monetization of the economies within the Odrysian kingdom is evident from the end of the fifth century on (see [Chapter 18](#)). The large number of hoards discovered in the Thracian plain and the abundance of single finds in settlements reflect intensive circulation, and suggest that already in the time of Kotys I (383–360/359) monetary transactions took precedence over payments in kind. Greek city-states certainly played a role in this transformation, being the main partner of and a gateway for Thracian foreign trade. Royal coinages designed after Greek models clearly demonstrate this symbiosis. The coins imitating Thasian silver issues, as well as the launch of royal bronze issues at the turn of the fifth and fourth century, denote the extensive demand for coined money that pervaded the Odrysian kingdom.

The Odrysian kings adopted fiduciary money nearly at the same time as their Macedonian neighbors and before most of the Greek poleis. Initially rare, bronze issues multiplied in the time of Kotys I and this trend continued after the subjugation of Thrace by Philip II. Psôma (2011, 150) is probably right in thinking that the royal bronzes were issued for the purpose of military finance, but this does not invalidate their commercial function: soldiers would hardly accept money that was not recognized in the marketplace (cf. [Arist.] *Oec.* 2.1350a). Imposition of monetary taxes is another possible stimulus for the increase of bronzes in circulation; it also stimulates producers to sell on the

market. Diodorus (16. 71.2) informs us that Philip II had set tithes on the Thracians, leaving us to guess whether these were administratively imposed monetary taxes and whether they existed before Philip. In all cases the spread of bronze coinage is symptomatic of several parallel phenomena: developed small-scale trade; a preference for monetary instead of natural exchange; increased need for small payments from the central authority; and the existence of fiscal regulation. In these respects the Odrysian kingdom seems to have anticipated the royal economies of the Near East and Egypt, where a similar use of coined money reached significant levels only under the rule of the Successors (Aperghis 2004, 213–246; von Reden 2007, 29–78).

Deposits of cast or scrap silver – jewelry and coins cut in pieces – are not at all common in Thrace; these means of payment were never as popular there as they were in Mesopotamia or Egypt (cf. Kroll 2001). Instead, precious metals in the form of vessels seem to have been the preferred media for the transfer and storage of large sums, while silver and bronze coins covered the two lower levels of transactions. Such mixed monetary systems were neither limited to “barbarian” economies, nor should they be considered primitive (Kim and Kroll 2008, 65–67). Large non-monetary payments were suitable for high-level international commerce; it is not very believable, for example, that ship-building timber was paid for with the hemidrachms of Parion and Chersonesos popular in fourth-century Thrace (cf. Yourukova 1992, 79). Compared to monetary payments, those made in silverware are more difficult to track down, since silver vessels also circulated widely as gifts, tribute, and plunder, and often ended up in the melting pot, or in mixed deposits of obscure nature, such as the Rogozen treasure.

27.6 Commodities

Reviews of the commodities exported from Thrace usually list resources, foods, and processed products, such as timber, charcoal, live-stock, hides, grain, honey, and wax, among others, all of which are occasionally mentioned in ancient texts as found or produced in Thrace, but never explicitly proved to have been the object of organized trade. Thrace was not famous for a particular commodity in the way, for example, Egypt and the Bosporan kingdom were famous for their grain, Macedonia its timber, or Thasos, Chios, and Mende their wines; nor have Thracian exports been attested archaeologically. Explanations could be sought in the nature of these exports, which consist of mainly rural produce and raw materials. Most ended up in Greek coastal settlements without leaving a trace; what was reexported further had barely been labeled with its primary origin. There are, however, two major exceptions: the trades in silver and slaves.

The export of Thracian silver in the form of coins has already been mentioned. No matter what primary function we posit for these coins –

bullion or medium of exchange – they were the earliest and most clearly attested interregional export from the hinterland of Thrace. It helps to imagine a similar export of gold that was mined in the same area (Hdt. 6.46–48, 7.112; Thuc. 4.105; Eur., Rh. 915; Strabo 7 fr. 33–34), but not minted as coin until the fourth century. The participation of Thracians in the extraction and trade of precious metals is a particularly interesting theme. It is certain that some of the mines on the mainland were under the control of local tribes (Hdt. 7.112; Xen., *Hel.* 5.2, 11–43), but it is unclear whether the Thracians themselves mined, extracted, and minted the silver. Scholars tend to see the Thracian side as rather passive (Loukopoulou 2007) or, in the best case, as having its silver struck in Greek mints, as part of a deal for access to the resource (Tacheva 2002, 267). But Thracian communities or powerful individuals who had both precious resources and access to international trade might have been interested in adopting the technologies of refining silver and striking coins.

Repeatedly mentioned in the ancient literary sources and well-attested in the epigraphic record, slaves were probably the sole, internationally recognized Thracian commodity in antiquity. Despite this, we cannot quantify this trade, nor can we say much about its organization. Most modern studies recognize the difficulties of dealing with ethnically derived names, which are the main source of information. We know, however, that: Athens imported substantial quantities of Thracian slaves (Velkov 1964); they were shipped through Greek cities both on the Aegean and the Black Sea coast (Avram 2007); this was fairly profitable business (Gavriljuk 2003, 79–80); and slaves were supplied through internal military conflicts (Xen., *Anab.* 7.3.48), but also through peaceful sale (Hdt. 5.6), probably as a response to short-term economic problems (Braund and Tsatskheladze 1989, 117–118).

While commodities imported into Thrace are no better attested in the sources, they are more visible archaeologically. From the seventh century until the Roman conquest, nearly all surviving identifiable imports originate from places in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea; imports from central and western Europe, as well as the western Mediterranean, are negligible in quantity. Crafted ceramics and metal objects constituted only a tiny component of the exchange; some were not traded, and the rest represent only the visible tip of the iceberg of perishable goods. A great part of the bulk commodities was packed in ceramic containers, evidence of which is abundant in the Hebros and Tonzos valleys from the late fifth century on. During the early Hellenistic period amphorae are present at nearly all sites in the Thracian plain, which indicates that imported food and drink were accessible to most of society. The increase in imported goods goes hand in hand with the previously discussed monetization of the Thracian economies and both together denote a wider Thracian participation in market exchange.

The appearance of market-oriented demand in Thrace is a phenomenon that deserves a study of its own. The question whether consumption behavior

triggered market behavior or vice versa resembles a circular cause-and-effect dilemma; in the Odrysian kingdom both the chicken and the egg emerged in the late fifth century. It is not necessary, though, to look for the earliest evidence in order to obtain an idea of how the process started. The custom of Thracian elites being buried with a Greek transport amphora along with a set of luxury items is traceable to the second century. Its practice in a period when the imported jars were omnipresent rubbish in Thracian settlements reflects a long since forgotten time when imported Greek wine was a luxury reserved for the few. The role of the elite's ideology and taste as demand-creators in the population is only one side of the coin; on the other side is a process of societal transformation, related to the concentration of people in urban communities conducive to consumption behavior.

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Notes

- 1 This contribution was written in 2012. I was unable to take into account studies published after this date, including Z. H. Archibald, *Ancient Economies of the Northern Aegean: Fifth to First Centuries BC*. Oxford University Press, 2013.
- 2 All ancient dates BCE unless otherwise indicated.
- 3 Khandzhiřska and Lozanov (2010, 253) entertained the possibility that a structure excavated by them could be interpreted as part of an agora.
- 4 In the primary publication of Getov (2006), the jug-measure was interpreted as a container for high-value liquids.

Chapter 28

Warfare

Totko Stoyanov

28.1 Introduction

Historians and archaeologists have long held an interest in Thracian warfare (Launey 1987; Best 1969; Melyukova 1979; Archibald 1998; Webber 2011). The publication of new archaeological evidence from Thrace and elsewhere supplements the ancient literary record, which offers sparse details about the weapons, combat formations, tactics, and strategy of the Thracians, and provides an opportunity to reconstruct these aspects of Thracian military history. These new data suggest that the military art in Thrace developed in response to a combination of local economic and social factors, as well as interactions with prominent neighbors, like Greeks, Scythians, and Persians; interaction with the Celts, beginning already ca. 350–300,¹ and the subsequent inclusion of large parts of Thrace within the Hellenistic world stimulated further military development.

Thracian society never adopted the polis, which in Greece had led to the establishment of hoplite armies. Literary and material evidence, chiefly Greek painted pottery, identify light infantry as the primary military unit in Thrace; these soldiers, armed with bows, arrows, slings, and/or spears, often carried in addition a light shield (pelte), hence the popular description of light infantry as peltasts. Ancient sources and modern scholars agree that both the crescent-shaped pelte and the concept that infantry could be so armored were adopted in Greece from Thrace (Best 1969). Since the natural environment in much of Thrace was favorable to horse-breeding, the same weaponry kit, except the sling, was also used by cavalry; with the emergence of local elites in the Archaic period, however, the weapons for elite and non-elite horsemen were gradually differentiated.

28.2 The Artifacts

Arrowheads

The numerous arrowheads found in the cemeteries and settlements of Thrace, especially north of Haemus (mod. Balkan range, Stara planina), suggest that the bow was one of the most important Thracian weapons. Thucydides describes the Getae as bow-shooting horsemen and favoring the same weapons as their Scythian neighbors (2.96.1). Although the climate and soil of Thrace poorly preserve evidence of bows, their reconstruction can be inferred

from arrowheads. Since the common Thracian bronze arrowheads, three-sided and three-edged with socket, are identical to those typical in Scythia, it is plausible that Thracians used reflex bows similar in size and design to Scythian bows, which were relatively short, 60–100 cm in length, with an asymmetrical sigma-shaped curve (Melyukova 1964, 14–15). The small dimensions facilitated use of the weapon while on horseback. Despite its modest size, by the Classical period the Scythian bow reached its peak development and offered a remarkable shooting range (McLeod 1965, 6, T.6). The representation of such a bow in the hands of a horseman on the silver greave from Agighiol (Berciu 1971, 218, taf. 113a) and the miniature bow models from the Yankovo and Enisala graves strongly suggest that such bows were used in Thrace.

Hundreds of arrowheads have been discovered in rich fifth- to third-century graves in Thrace. Two quivers holding 192 arrowheads were recovered from a grave near Golemanite dated ca. 450–400 (Tsarov 2008, 88–91, fig. 68), while a leather quiver from a mid-fourth-century grave near Zlatinitza contained 177 (Agre 2011, 97–99, ill. III–25c, 29, VII–3). Arrowheads recovered from fourth- to third-century graves and settlements fall into three length classes, 4.0–4.5, 3.5–3.6, and 2.5–2.8 cm, which probably had distinct uses in hunting or military exercises, for example. A significant comparandum is provided by the quiver from Tomb II at Vergina, which contained 74 arrowheads of three distinct lengths: 4.4, 3.8, and 2.45 cm (Andronikos 1989, 186; Rihll 2007, 39). While bronze arrowheads of this and similar morphological types are found in the Balkans as early as the Archaic period, they became characteristic of Greece and Macedonia (Robinson 1941, 405–406, type G 1, nos. 2097–2100; Snodgrass 1964, 153) in the Classical period.

Iron arrowheads with solid pyramidal tip and long tang for hafting begin to appear in the mid-fourth century; similar arrowheads in bronze are known from the Aegean as early as the Late Bronze Age and were probably developed to pierce metal armor. Iron arrowheads of this type are known from Olynthus (Robinson 1941, type E 392–397, nos. 1972–2026, pls. CXXIII–CXXIV), where they were likely used by Philip II's archers during his siege of that city in 348; similar examples have been recorded at Sboryanovo and Dragoevo (Stoyanov 2008, 50 nn. 21–22, fig. 2.9–12). Their size and weight suggest considerable arrow size and bow capacity; some objects with very long tangs (Stoyanov 2008, 50 n. 22) required a powerful bow or, what is more likely, the gastraphetes, the mechanical version of a reflex bow, which had been in use since the second half of the fifth century and represents an early stage in the development of ancient artillery (Marsden 1969, 5–12, fig. 1, 4; Rihll 2007, 35–39; Campbell 2011).

Sling-bullets

Evidence for sling use in Thrace during the Classical and especially the

Hellenistic period has increased considerably in recent years. Finds from several late-fifth- to mid-third-century graves and from Sboryanovo suggest that traditional stone sling-bullets were used locally (Stoyanov et al. 2006, 44, fig. 64f). Several rich Thracian burials yielded stone sling-bullets 3.5–4 cm in length, sometimes reaching 5 cm (Berciu 1971, 219, taf. 127.10, 12; Tsarov 2008, 91–92, fig. 70). It is important to identify the type of sling used with such bullets, whether the common type, sphendone, or the staff-sling, known in Latin as fustibalus, which was suited to slinging heavier projectiles across short distances (Korfmann 1973, 37–38).

Stray finds indicate that lead sling-bullets were used in southwestern Thrace, which is not surprising given the proximity to Macedonia (Paunov and Dimitrov 2000). Of greater interest is the evidence furnished by the excavations of the Thracian residence (?) at Kozi Gramadi peak, in the Sredna Gora Mountains (Christov 2012a). The plotting of the findspots of the 152 lead sling-bullets in and around the fortress, the different weight standards attested in the group, and the names Kleoboulos and Anaxandros inscribed upon some of these projectiles, have led the excavators to suggest that they are the remnants of a clash with Philip II's troops during his 342/1 Thracian campaign; some of the sling-bullets seem to belong to the defenders of the residence (Christov 2012b). Clay sling-bullets similar to those in lead are known from Sboryanovo (Stoyanov et al. 2006, 44, fig. 64f).

Spearheads

Two types of spearhead were used in Thrace as early as the Early Iron Age: a small spearhead for javelins and a large spearhead for thrusting spears. As in Greece, these spearheads are either laurel-shaped or pointed. The javelin type is 16–25 cm in length, while that of the thrusting type is 31–43 cm. The representation of peltasts and horsemen with two light spears on Red-Figure pottery (Webber 2011, pls. 4–7) is corroborated by fifth-century graves with two such tips (Archibald 1998, 202–203, figs. 6.6, 6.8). More than 10 spearheads, for both thrusting and throwing, are usually found in rich fourth- to third-century burials from Thrace. Finds from the Dragoevo fortress include a spearhead, butt-spike (sauroter), and haft for an infantry sarissa² of the type introduced by Philip II into his phalanx (compare Andronikos 1970, 96–107, figs. 5, 6–8, 9a, c), which suggest that Philip and Alexander's innovations in weaponry were adopted in Thrace beginning in the second half of the fourth century.

Swords

As early as ca. 1100 in Thrace and in Greece, straight, double-edged swords measuring ca. 75 cm in length (Naue II type: Kilian-Dirlmeier 1993, 106–115) were locally produced and circulated.³ With the evolution of the hoplite

phalanx in the Greek polis, use of such swords gradually became less common due to the dominant position of spears (Snodgrass 1967, 58); in Thrace, though, this type likely remained in use until the appearance of other types of swords, such as the single-edged machaira or kopis and the akinakes. Several variations of the latter were adopted by the Scythians and are characteristic of the north Thracian territories; by the fourth century, however, the type is almost extinct and replaced by the machaira and xiphos (Vulpe 1990; Atanasov 1995, nos. 9–12; Tsarov 2008, 84–86, fig. 65). With the Zagortsi sword in mind, the date of which remains debated (Nankov 2007, 37, fig. 2), and two swords from Dragoevo, which, according to their size, must be of earlier date (Atanasov 1995, nos. 1–2), the Thracian use of the xiphos dates from the beginning of the Classical period. One such sword or dagger is found together with bell-shaped armor in the rich grave from Svetlen, dated ca. 450–400; xiphoi are also known from the Kaloyanovo and Vishegrad tombs, dated ca. 350–325 (Dimitrova 1980, 221–222, no. 1, abb. 6). A xiphos from the Zimnicea necropolis (Teleaga 2008, 293, no. 4) and the bone scabbards from Seuthopolis (Nankov 2007, 37, fig. 2) and Yankovo (Atanasov 1995, no. 8) correspond to the xiphoi with similar scabbards featured on the walls of Alexandrovo tomb (see [Chapter 13](#)) and suggest the popularity of the type in early Hellenistic Thrace (Nankov 2007). In all likelihood, the sword of the Getic ruler interred in the Tomb with Caryatids at Sveshtari is also a xiphos (Chichikova, Stoyanova, and Stoyanov 2012, 80, cat. no. 17).

South of Haemus in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, the preferred weapon for close combat, especially by the cavalry, was the machaira (Agre 2011, 92–95; Webber 2011, 59–60). Thucydides' description of the Thracian Dii, who reside in the Rhodope Mountains, as machairophoroi at 2.96.2 suggests that the machaira could be the primary infantry weapon for certain Thracian tribes. Thracian horsemen on Red-Figure mugs from Apollonia Pontica and Karnobat carry a machaira in addition to two spears (Webber 2011, pls. 4–7; for the production of these mugs, see Hermary 2010, 484–486.). Finds, such as the machaira from Zlatinitsa grave, indicate that weapon size might be dependent on the status of the warrior (Agre 2011, 91, app. A). As in Macedonia and the broader Hellenistic world, Thracian members of the ruling elite commissioned, or received as gifts, swords with richly decorated handles and sheaths, like that from “Golyama Kosmatka” tomb, considered by its excavator to be the burial place of Seuthes III (Kitov 2005, 78, fig. 64).

Battle-axes

To date there are only two battle-axes with secure Thracian provenance, one from Sboryanovo, the other from the rich grave in mound III near Kralevo. The date of both contexts is the first half of the third century (Stoyanov et al. 2006, 44–45, fig. 65). The inventory of the Kralevo grave suggests that these

axes were used by horsemen. Similar axes, known from the Caucasus and Scythia already in the fourth century, are typical weapons of the cavalry of the fourth-century kingdom of the Cimmerian Bosphorus and were depicted on artifacts from the northern Black Sea (Melyukova 1964, 65–68, pl. 21.10–16, 21).

Shields

Shields of this period are better attested in written sources and more fully known from representations on metalwork and in tomb paintings than from archaeological finds. There is still debate as to whether the representations of oval shields from the Kazanlak tomb, round shields from Alexandrovo, and the shield from the Sveshtari tomb represent actual shields in use at the time that these monuments were created (see [Chapter 13](#)). Herodotus (7.75.1) relates that the European Thracians carried peltai, javelins, and short swords, while, according to Xenophon, the “Thracians took to flight, swinging their shields around behind them, as was their custom” (Anab. 7.4.17; trans. C. L. Brownson). Describing the army of Seuthes II, Xenophon lists three kinds of military units: hoplites, horsemen, and peltasts (Anab. 7.3.40). The literary evidence can be linked to similar representations on Red-Figure mugs from Apollonia Pontica and Karnobat, where two peltasts move at a rapid pace and flank a horseman; in the former the horseman has slung his pelte across his back, while in the latter both horseman and a peltast do so (Webber 2011, pls. 4–7). Finds of shields in Thrace, especially the peltai, are extremely rare and may be due to the perishable materials from which they were made.

The two shields from the rich grave near Golemanite, possibly the earliest known from Thrace to date, have an asymmetrical, oval shape, which resembles shields represented in art from Scythia and the northern Black Sea area (e.g., the gold comb from Soloha kurgan: Melyukova 1964, 78, taf. 4.1–2). One has been plausibly restored as originally coated with articulated iron sheets (Tsarov 2008, 94–95, figs. 73–74); the semicircular central component of the other, from which only six iron fittings are preserved, suggests a similar shape (Tsarov 2008, 92–94, figs. 71–72). Vertical rectangular iron pieces also decorate the shield from a rich grave near Kirkclareli in southeastern Thrace, dated to the mid-fourth century (Delemen, Çokay Kepçe, and Yılmaz 2010, 6, fig. 4). At present, the only convincing hoplite shield known from Thrace was discovered in the above-mentioned tomb on Vishegrad peak in the Sakar Mountains. Its bronze fittings suggest a diameter of 98 cm (Dimitrova 1980, 224–234, abb. 9–15, 18–19, 21, 23). A mid-fourth-century rich grave of an equestrian warrior from the Peichova tumulus near the village of Starosel, Plovdiv district, contained the remains of a round shield (Kitov 2003, 30, 32–33). Two shields were recovered from the early Hellenistic grave of an equestrian warrior from Dolna Koznitsa, Kyustendil district: the one, oval, measuring 90 x 65 cm, is covered with a monolithic bronze sheet, while the

other, fragmentary, was ca. 80 cm in diameter. Another round shield with solid bronze base and centrally mounted handle was found in a rich tomb at Naip, near Bisanthe, dated to the late fourth century (Delemen 2004, 94–105, figs. 93–101), the size, ca. 67 cm in diameter, and date of which suggest a relationship with the “Macedonian” shield introduced by Alexander’s successors (Sekunda 2010, 458).

Helmets

While the Illyrian helmet dominates west of the Axios River throughout the Archaic and Classical periods (Pflug 1988a, 48–64, abb. 9, 14, 19; Archibald 1998, 201 n. 26; Teleaga 2008, 232–233), no helmet of this type has yet been recovered from Thrace east of the Chalkidiki and north to the Danube River; instead, approximately 100 helmets of other type, mostly Chalkidian, are known from this territory. The Corinthian helmet is, by contrast, quite rare in Thrace, with only two similar examples from the plain of Sofia known, both retrieved from uncertain contexts (Chelopechene: Pflug 1988b, 104 n. 173; Archibald 1998, 201 n. 28, fig. 8.4a; Chelopech: Dimitrova 2004, 127, cat. no. 252) and dated between the final third of the sixth and the early fifth century (Pflug 1988b, 87–94, 102–104, abb. 32–33, 36–37, 48; Connolly 1998, 61–62). The Corinthian helmet does appear on silver and bronze issues of Mesambria Pontica, as well as on early Hellenistic amphora stamps from the city, based on associations with the fabled founder of the city, Melsas, and its place as an emblem of the collegium of the strategoi (cf. Stoyanov 2007, 157 and n. 31).

The Chalkidian helmet was typical in Thrace from the fifth to the early third century, with evidence for more than 60 artifacts of this type known, most with secure provenance (Ogdenova-Marinova and Stoyanov 2005, 523–524; Stoyanov 2005; Teleaga 2008, 235–239). Most common are types II and V (Pflug 1988c), with an observed tendency toward local variations that find no parallels outside of Thrace; these examples inspired the ceremonial silver helmets from Agighiol, Peretu, and the Iron Gates, as well as those in gold from Băiceni and Poiana-Coțofenești (Ogdenova-Marinova and Stoyanov 2005, 519–525). Such helmets are especially well attested in northeastern Thrace in the probable core territory of the mid-fourth- to mid-third-century Getic state (cf. Stoyanov 2000, 62; Stoyanov et al. 2006, 55, fig. 73).

The Thracian helmet (Jarva 1995; Connolly 1998), sometimes described as “Phrygian” (Vokotopoulou 1982; Waurick 1988, 163) or “tiara-like” (Dintsis 1986, 23, 50–53), grew popular in southern Thrace beginning in the late Classical period (Minchev 2009, 347–348; Webber 2011, 40–41). More than 20 such helmets have been found in Thrace, with reports of additional examples from private collections. Four examples have been discovered in the Kazanlak area and the type is depicted on paintings inside the Kazanlak and Alexandrovo tombs, while additional fragments of such helmets from

northeastern Bulgaria have recently been published (Minchev 2009, 348–353, figs. 1–4); this geographical distribution may suggest that these helmets were in use in territories not directly controlled by Macedonians. It is difficult to accept uncritically J. Vokotopoulou’s proposition (1982, 519) that the “Phrygian type helmet was introduced to Thrace by the Macedonians after Philip II and Alexander.” Finds of this type, normally from warrior graves and usually in combination with the typical local weapon, *romphaia*, are also concentrated in the central and western Rhodope Mountains, lands associated with the notoriously unmanageable Thracian ethnē of the Satri and Bessi (cf. Waurick 1988, 168, ab. 46; Mikov 2010). Additional support for the hypothesis of local production and use of Thracian-type helmets is provided by the virtual absence in Thrace of the Boiotian helmets characteristic of the Macedonian army (only one example is known, of dubious provenance: Dimitrov 2006) and by the fact that Phrygian helmets are sparsely represented in northern Greece and Macedonia, where the custom of placing armor and weapons within soldiers’ graves is attested, as in Thrace.

While several finds of Attic- and Pylos-type helmets, or their variations, are known from Thrace, all date to the Hellenistic period (e.g., Teleaga 2008, 239–240, no. 2); they are clearly not representative of Thrace, despite the campaigns of Philip II, Alexander, Zopyrion, and Lysimachus in the region (see [Chapters 5–6](#)). Thus, all facts presented above speak in favor of the local production and use of Thracian-type helmets (Wassilev 1984; Mikov 2010).

Concerning the origin, production centers, and date of this group, some previously neglected data – the amphora stamps of Thasos with pictures of Chalkidian- and Thracian-type helmets – are to be included in the discussion; such helmets were probably produced on the island and shipped to Thracian markets (Stoyanov 2007, 155–158, pl. II.5–6), where Thasian goods and traders were predominant until the first decades of the third century.

Armor

While it is not clear what type of armor Xenophon had in mind when he described Seuthes’ cavalry (Anab. 7.3.40; the term *thorax* can describe breast-plates, leather-linen armor with metal fittings, or scale armor: see Lee 2008, 112), the number of armor finds of almost all known types and variants found in Thrace is increasing constantly (Ogdenova 1961; Ogdenova 2000). The earliest finds belong to the so-called “bell-shaped” type (type I: Jarva 1995, 20–29), known also in Archaic Greece, which began to appear in elite graves ca. 450–400 (e.g., Duvanli, Tatarevo, Svetlen, Shipka, and Gorski Izvor, among others).

New burial finds confirm the proposition that in Thrace type II and IV cuirasses (Jarva 1995, 29–30, 33–44) were combined with varying frontal neck-guards (*peritrechelion*); Macedonia furnishes parallels. Striking

examples from Mezek, Yankovo, and Varbitsa (Ogdenova 1961, 530–533) are made of iron sheet and covered by gilded silver foil with rich plastic decoration in concentric arrangement. Some scholars believe that the three breast-plates from Thrace and similar examples found in Tomb II at Vergina, Katerini, and Pydna were produced in the same Amphipolis workshop (Faklaris 1991, 16). Three recently discovered examples from the Kazanlak Valley, still unpublished, may be added to the known breast-plates from Thrace. The full reconstruction of scale armor in combination with a similar neck-guard in the Zlatinitsa burial has shed light on this type of armor, which was obviously popular in Thrace during the fourth century (Agre 2011, 72–84, fig. III.15–19).

Greaves become a component of Thracian armor later than plate cuirasses, ca. 400–350. The earliest complex with a pair of greaves is the rich burial in Psychova tumulus near Starosel, dated to the mid-fourth century (Kitov 2003, 33). The four ceremonial silver greaves from Agighiol, Vratsa, and Zlatinitsa (Agre 2011, 45–72, fig. III.1–14), likely produced ca. 375–350, testify to the earlier use of greaves by wealthy cavalymen in Thrace.

28.3 Cavalry: Weaponry and Equipment

Detailed and presumably authentic depictions of Thracian light cavalry, which were known during the fourth century, employed by Alexander, and held in high esteem throughout the Hellenistic period (Launey 1987, 368–395), are featured on Black-Figure mugs from Sozopol and Karnobat that were produced ca. 420 specifically for the local market in an Attic workshop recreating a local form (Hermayr 2010, 484–486, fig. 336); it is tempting to speculate that these images represent cavalry similar to that described by Xenophon in 400 (Anab. 7.4.4).

The early formation of heavy cavalry in Thrace took place in the last third of the fifth century and increasingly rich finds with broad geographic distribution are observed in the fourth century through the campaigns of Philip II and Alexander. Based on the general archaeological record in Thrace ca. 600–450, it is reasonable to assume that Sitalces' encounter with the heavy cavalry of Upper Macedonia decisively influenced this development (Thuc. 2.100.5). As indicated above, the use of shields by elite cavalry in Thrace increases beginning in the last decades of the fifth century. N. Sekunda's assertion (2010, 469 n. 70) that the Macedonian (and Greek) cavalry began to use shields only in the 270s, borrowing the technique from Celtic invaders, is shaky, given the constant interaction between Thracians, Greeks, and Macedonians in earlier centuries.

Bridles

The growing number of rich graves, murals, and toreutic artifacts indicates that several types of bridle were in use. During the fourth century in Thrace, as in Greece and more broadly in the Mediterranean, variants of severe bridles (type VII and VIII, after Donder 1980; type V, X–XI, after Werner 1988) were introduced.

Saddle and stirrups

The quantity and diversity of spurs excavated at Sboryanovo and other settlement centers in northeastern Thrace raise questions about the introduction of other horse trappings critical in battle, especially the hard saddle and stirrups (Stoyanov 2003). The depiction of the ruler in the Tomb with Caryatids at Sveshtari seems to be the first representation of such elements from Hellenistic Thrace (Chichikova et al. 2012, 47). The outline of a saddle with a high back and rising front board, comparable to the high saddles of the time and so far unique in Thrace, is unmistakable. Scholars have already established, however, that the introduction of stirrups was directly preceded by the adoption of the hard saddle. Such a development is entirely plausible for early Hellenistic Thrace, given Scythian artifacts dated to the late fourth century, like the Chertomlujk amphora-rhyton, which depicts a narrow strap attached to the saddle (Vigneron 1968, 81–83, pl. 33b). At Sveshtari, the narrow strap drops down and slightly forward from the king's saddle, wraps behind his leg and reaches the arch of the foot; the tip of the shoe rests in and is entirely enveloped by a broad band, most likely a leather stirrup (Chichikova et al. 2012, 47, fig. 66); such an identification is also supported by the position of the leg, which is bent at the knee. Several fittings from the Letnitsa hoard, dated to the mid-fourth century, offer some of the earliest images of horsemen with leg bent at a right angle and foot resting horizontally (Venedikov and Gerassimov 1979, 120–121, ill. 285–286).

28.4 Artillery

Although historians of ancient Thrace have been silent on the subject of artillery until recently, finds from Seuthopolis, Sboryanovo, Pistiros, “Kozi Gramadi,” Dragoevo (Stoyanov 2008, 46–47 nn. 2–5; Nankov 2008), and Kalyva indicate that artillery was used by armies of the Thracian rulers and those fighting for control over Thracian territory. In fact, southern Thrace was an early, prominent venue for the development of Philip II's artillery, with the technology featuring prominently in the siege of Olynthos, the conquest of the Chalkidiki, and especially in the sieges of Perinthos and Byzantion (Marsden 1977, 216–221; Campbell 2011, 681); and, in one of the earliest attested

defensive uses of artillery, catapults sent by Byzantium were deployed against Philip by the Perinthians during his siege of the city (Marsden 1969, 116). Lysimachus laid siege to Odessos, Callatis, and Istros in 313; although archaeological evidence of catapults from these cities is still lacking, Lysimachus certainly possessed such engines (Plut., Demetr. 20.8).

Several arrowheads from Sboryanovo with solid pyramidal tip and a long tang for hafting were either propelled by a very powerful bow, or, less likely, gastraphetes. One such projectile, 9.2 cm long and weighing 14 g, is atypical for northeastern Thrace, although analogous projectiles are known from Dragoevo (Stoyanov 2008, 50, fig. 2.9–12); similar finds are known from Pistiros, which have been compared to examples from Macedonia and Greece (Domaradzki 1993, 41). Identical projectiles are confidently identified as catapult darts at Egypt's Qasr Ibrim (Campbell 2003, 35). Additional finds from Sboryanovo suggest the use of larger artillery, including a projectile tip with solid, pyramidal head and long, cylindrical socket tang, measuring 19.6 cm in length and weighing 29 g (Stoyanov 2008, 50, fig. 2.6–7); at present, no ancient parallel for a projectile of this size is known. Another category of projectile, with heavy pyramidal tip and a relatively long conical cap, was recovered at Sboryanovo, which compares well with finds from Seuthopolis that measure 6.3 to 9 cm in length and have been correctly identified by E. Nankov (2008, 40, fig. 18) as catapult projectiles. A larger type, 14 cm in length, is also known from Sboryanovo. In the absence of information about their exact find spots, however, it is impossible to know whether these should be associated with defensive or offensive artillery.

Catapult projectiles from Macedonia, Illyria, Bosphorus, and other parts of the Hellenistic world are similar in form and dimension. Projectiles from the late Hellenistic villa in Ephyra, Epirus, measure 9.5–10 cm in length and presumably were attached to shafts measuring ca. 77 cm in length and fired by a small caliber catapult measuring 2.1 by 1.2 m (Campbell 2003, 14). Comparison with the Thracian artifacts suggests that the smaller projectiles were hurled with a gastraphetes or small oxybeles, while the large one implies a longer shaft and a larger catapult.

A settlement complex on the terrace below the south fortification wall at Sboryanovo yielded a new type of socketed projectile with saw-edged double-foil, serrated tip. The asymmetrical section of the head was made to fit better with the catapult's mount. The surviving piece is 12 cm long, which, combined with a socket presumably 5–6 cm in length, suggests that it was shot by a large-caliber catapult. Similar projectiles have been found nearby in Shumen region (Stoyanov 2008, 53, fig. 2.8, nn. 37–38), but not, as yet, outside of Thrace.

In light of the established correlation between projectile size and catapult parameters, the evidence from Thrace discussed above suggests that at least four types of catapults were in use. Unfortunately, there is no specialized

study of the relationship of projectile type to catapult type, and so it is difficult to know whether only the oxybeles was used or if larger-caliber torsion catapults, palintones, were employed as well (see Campbell 2011, 680–689).

Based on find spot, three of the Sboryanovo projectiles should be associated with catapults installed on the extension of the southern fortification wall and the complex situated west of it (Stoyanov et al. 2006, 24, 43–44, fig. 44). The discovery of two of the projectiles beneath the destruction layer of the eastern wall of building C in this complex eliminates the possibility that they were used by the besieging army. It is most likely that the projectiles came from an arsenal located on the ground floor of the complex by the southern fortification wall, or from engines installed on the wall platform. These observations confirm the presence of arrow-hurling engines in the arsenal of the garrison defending the Getic capital in Sboryanovo (Stoyanov 2008, 53–54).

At present, the most decisive evidence of stone-throwing catapults (lithoboloi, petroboloi) from Thrace is also provided by Seuthopolis and Sboryanovo. Following the superficial presentation and interpretation of stone artillery balls from Seuthopolis in preliminary publications as evidence of “an assault following a siege with battering engines” after which the town was “completely destroyed and pillaged” (Dimitrov and Chichikova 1978, 58), E. Nankov has presented a more detailed study (2008, 40–42). A great portion of the stone balls are found near or along the east and southeastern curtain wall. Their caliber can be extrapolated from the scale photos in one of the publications (cf. Nankov 2008, 41, figs. 23–24). With diameters ranging from 6.5–7 cm for the smallest up to 12–13 cm for the largest, they fall within the 1–12 minae range, and thus required relatively small-caliber catapults (Campbell 2003, 17–22). Nankov cites 10–13 cm and 2–4 kg items (i.e., 5–10 minae caliber lithoboloi). His assertion that only torsion catapults were employed could be challenged, however (cf. Campbell 2011). He is skeptical about the use of stone balls by the besieging army (Nankov 2008, 41–42).

Important questions remain about both the identity of the attacker who allegedly employed these siege engines and the date of the siege. While the site’s excavators accept that Seuthopolis was destroyed in the 270s (Dimitrov and Chichikova 1978, 58), the recently revised date of amphorae stamps and import wares (West Slope style), together with the recognition of La Tène fibulae and materials in the town and its necropoleis, suggest a somewhat later date in the second quarter of the third century (Stoyanov 2006, 87; Balkanska and Tzochchev 2008). Based chiefly on numismatic evidence, M. Tacheva (2000, 25–27, 37) has dated the city’s destruction to 252 and associated it with the campaign of Antiochus II in southern Thrace; the idea has been favorably received (Nankov 2008). The use of catapults by Antiochus II is plausible and far more credible than their implementation by, for example, the Celts during one of their alleged attacks on Seuthopolis in the 270s. The

hypothesis that the town was taken easily, because the engines installed during the construction of the towers had already fallen out of use by 252 (Nankov 2008, 42), is open to debate.

When compared to the stone artillery balls from other ancient settlements, the 12 examples from Helis rank among the smallest. Four of these, measuring 5–7.8 cm in diameter and weighing 205–490 g, were probably shot by 1–10 minae non-torsion, oxybeles-type catapults. More formidable is a stone ball found in the destruction layer of a residential complex and dated ca. 300–250. Measuring ca. 24 cm in diameter and weighing ca. 18–20 kg, this stone shot was probably launched by a 40–45 minae caliber catapult that was operated by a team of at least seven men. The argument for its use by attackers, not defenders, is supplied by the material used – a type of sandstone not found locally (Stoyanov 2008, 57, fig. 4). The sling bullets and limestone and flint balls for small-caliber catapults found to date (Stoyanov et al. 2006, 44, fig. 64f), however, could be considered as belonging to the town defenders. The large sandstone ball and the two catapult projectiles from the complex on the third terrace (Stoyanov 2008, fig. 2.6, 8) discussed above suggest that the colossal fortification wall of Helis, which was reconstructed and extended in the course of the first half of the third century (Stoyanov et al. forthcoming), was created and maintained in the context of a lengthy and exhausting military conflict in northeastern Thrace in the late fourth and early third century. While literary sources are clear that the war between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes ended ca. 293–291 with the capture of Lysimachus (Delev 2000), the archaeological evidence indicates that even after these events the state of affairs in the area was not tranquil.

Six round, marble balls were recovered from the Kalyva fort, inscribed with letters that most likely indicated their weight (Triantaphyllos 2004, 115, fig. 65). A stone catapult ball was found at Pistiros (Nankov 2008, 42 n. 32). The discovery of additional evidence for the use of various types of catapults from the towns and forts of inland and coastal Thrace is eagerly anticipated.

28.5 Fortified Settlements, Fortresses, and Structures

Most archaeologically documented Iron Age stone fortifications in Thracian territories are located in mountainous regions, yet only a few can be dated confidently to the second phase of the Early Iron Age. The presence of extant constructions of this date as, for example, at Vishegrad, supports the idea that such a tradition existed prior to the arrival of both Greek apoikiai on the Thracian coast and Pistiros-type sites deep within the Thracian hinterland (see [Chapters 9 and 26](#)), which were obviously influenced by Greek traditions of fortification. Philologists are unanimous that the -diza, -dizos, -deize components of some Thracian toponyms can be translated as “wall” or

“fortress,” comparable to the Greek *teichos*, and that the settlements so named were fortified; another word, *tyrsis*, is usually thought to mean a fortified residence of a Thracian ruler or aristocrat (see [Chapters 9 and 26](#)). Xenophon, for example, recounts his visit to the well-guarded tower (*tyrsis*) of Seuthes II in a village in the hinterland of Perinthos (*Anab.* 7.2.21). The site near Kozi Gramadi is considered a fortified residence of a Thracian ruler, perhaps Odrysian, established in the mid-fourth century (Christov 2012a). Several sites in southern Thrace that may have some bearing on the problem, such as, for example, Knyazhevo, Topolovgrad district (Agre 2013), have come to light in the past decade, but their excavation has not yet reached a point from which substantial conclusions may be drawn. The absence of more specific information has generated many interpretations of the nature and role of such Classical and early Hellenistic Thracian royal residences; some scholars interpret them as the kernels of emerging Thracian urban centers with central economic and political significance (see [Chapter 9](#)). At present, however, no such evolution can be demonstrated archaeologically prior to Philip II’s conquest of, or extension of control over, large portions of southern and northeastern Thrace.

Two strategic fortifications in southern Thrace are likely to have been built by Philip II. The first, Kalyva, located in the southwestern Rhodope Mountains, is built in ashlar masonry on a commanding point overlooking the Nestos River (Triantaphyllos 2003, 92–96). The other, Buyuk Kale, occupies the “Vishegrad” peak, which, as the highest point in the Sakar Mountains (856 m), offered a vista of the roads along the Hebros and Tonsos Rivers to their confluence, as well as far to the north, east, and west. The fortification is built upon a square terrace measuring 75 x 75 m and is equipped with square corner towers and an ashlar curtain wall, which is preserved up to 2 m in thickness and up to 2.5 m in height. An isolated tumulus near the platform contains a small tomb, mentioned above, with a warrior burial from the fourth century including hoplite shield, spear, and xiphos, perhaps of a garrison officer (Dimitrova 1980).

New foundations with substantial fortification walls, but substantially different from the sites presented above with respect to history and function, such as Pistiros, Kabyle, Philippopolis, and Pernik in southern Thrace, and Sboryanovo, Coțofeni din Dos, Zimnicea, and Satu Nou, are discussed elsewhere in this volume (see [Chapters 9 and 26](#)). Here I offer summary remarks on this problem. The close correspondence in topography and wall trace between the fortress Philippi, the first settlement in Thrace reorganized and named after Philip II, and Kabyle is not coincidental and is a further indication of military changes in Thrace after Philip and Alexander (Stoyanov 2006, 89, 91). The most recent analysis of the fortifications of Seuthopolis, especially its towers and gates, has found direct parallels with the remodeled or newly built fortifications of the Successors in the Aegean and the

Mediterranean, like Cassandra, Dion, and Demetrias, and raises the possibility that architects and builders from the south were involved (Nankov 2008). Although in synergy with local traditions, plans and architectural traditions borrowed from Hellenistic poliorcetics are also documented at sites elsewhere in Thrace, such as, for example, Kabyle (Stoyanov 2006, 89–91). It is thus not accidental that both Seuthopolis and Helis have produced evidence of artillery use.

The territory of the ancient Getae in northeastern Bulgaria has recently produced detailed evidence of fortifications, which, in the early Hellenistic period and at other times, defended the borders of territories controlled by the Getae and Macedonians. Indirect evidence for this is found in ancient literary sources that discuss the contract between Dromichaetes and Lysimachus, in which the latter pledged to surrender the forts taken in the war upon his release from captivity (cf. Diod. 21.12.3, 6; Paus. 1.9.6; Lund 1992, 40, 45–49; Stoyanov et al. 2006, 55, fig. 73.)

28.6 Organization, Strategy, and Tactics

There is no evidence, unfortunately, that specifically addresses questions of military organization, strategy, and tactics in Thrace. Ancient literary sources, discussing the more significant conflicts that took place in Thrace, from Darius' campaign against Scythia to Rome's Macedonian Wars, can provide some clues.

The natural environment of Thrace offered potential for horse-rearing and the maintenance of cavalry units that were substantial when compared to those of much of mainland and Aegean Greece. The most telling and discussed example is offered by Thucydides, who claims (2.98.3–4) that 50,000 horsemen were enlisted by Sitalces in his Macedonian campaign of 429 (Archibald 1998, 205). The interactions of the Getae with the Scythians resulted in Getic borrowing of many typical Scythian weapons and probably the associated methods of fighting. Many scholars accept wholeheartedly Arrian's remark (Tact. 16.6) that the Macedonians, perhaps under Philip II, adopted the arrangement of tetrarchiai cavalry units into a V-formation from the Thracians, who in turn had copied it from the Scythians (Archibald 1998, 204; Sekunda 2007, 331, fig. 11.3; Lund 1992, 47 even claims that the Getae were the Thracians that adopted these tactics); direct evidence, however, is lacking. The proposition that the 2000 Getic cavalymen employed successfully by Seuthes (II?) in his war against Athens in the Thracian Chersonese in the late fifth century (Polyaen. 7.38) were in fact a professional unit (Archibald 1998, 205) deserves consideration.

The most numerous types of soldiers were certainly the light infantry or peltasts. Discussion continues about the degree to which knowledge of the weaponry and tactical capacity of Thracian peltasts was based on the reform

of Iphicrates and Philip II's establishment of the Macedonian phalanx (cf. Best 1969, 79–119; Sekunda 2007, 326–329). The review of Thracian weapons known from archaeological contexts, however, indirectly suggests the potential of ancient Thrace for this debate.

The presence of Greeks and especially the service of prominent Greek commanders under Thracian rulers in the Classical period influenced the development of the military art in Thrace. Before the beginning of excavations at Pistiros, the grave of a Greek warrior or commander near Pesnopoy, Plovdiv district, dated ca. 425–400 (Domaradzki 2003, 106) seemed odd and isolated deep within the Thracian hinterland; the burial, in a clay sarcophagus from a grave without a tumulus, is distinct from local custom. The establishment and development of emporia with Greek populations in inland Thrace by the fifth century and their presumed maintenance of military forces (Domaradzki 1993, 41) may help to explain the Pesnopoy burial. Such conditions also indicate a considerably improved capacity for weapon use and production. Military units consisting of garrison or volunteer forces were needed to man the fortifications of Pistiros from its foundation in the mid-fifth century. This evidence leads to a revision of traditional interpretations of Arrian's description of Alexander's Thracian campaign in 335: "Starting from Amphipolis, he invaded Thrace ... and in ten days reached Mount Haemus, where there met him ... many of the merchants (*tōn emporōn*) in arms and the independent Thracians" (Anab. 1.1.5–6, trans. Robson; cf. Domaradzka and Velkov 1994, 9: "un grand nombre d'emporitains"; Domaradzki 2003, 112 nn. 25–26).

The presence of many Greek military units deep within the Thracian hinterland, armed according to their native tradition and under Greek commanders, from the second half of the fifth century until Alexander's campaign, offers a new perspective on the evolution of war in Thrace. The employment of experienced generals, such as Iphicrates and Chares (married to Kotys' daughters) as commanders of the Odrysian armies of Kotys and Kersebleptes, suggests a highly evolved military art in Thrace, even prior to Philip and Alexander's Thracian campaigns. The short stay of Xenophon's mercenary army in southeastern Thrace may also have been influential in this development.

Evidence for the construction of temporary camps is also of interest. Xenophon describes the camp of the Odrysian unit of 200 horsemen and 300 peltasts, which was sent to aid Derkyllidas in Bithynia in 399, as featuring palisades standing as tall as a man (Hell. 3.2.2–5). Arrian notes that, during his Thracian campaign in 335, Alexander came upon the Triballian army at their camp by the Lyginus River, but provides no further detail (Anab. 1.2.4); the Triballoi are also alleged to have arranged their forces in three parts, center, left, and right flanks (Anab. 1.2.5–6), which many scholars have regarded as the beginning of a formation for battle position, in Greek fashion

(Danov and Fol 1979, 187).

Military activity in Thrace, from the arrival of Lysimachus in 323 until his war with Dromichaetes in the 290s, likely contributed to the emergence of skilled Thracian commanders and capable Thracian units of light and possibly heavy infantry, heavy and light cavalry, military architecture, and poliorcetics. The clash of the armies of Seuthes III with those of Lysimachus may suggest the presence of regular, well-equipped, and well-armed Thracian units among the 20,000 infantry and 8,000 cavalry; the fierce battle resulted in many casualties even within Lysimachus' professional army (Diod. 18.14.2–4; cf. Loukopoulou 2011). In describing Lysimachus' encounter with Dromichaetes and the Getae, Pausanias wrote that “engaging with men not unversed in warfare and far superior in number, he himself [Lysimachus] escaped from a position of extreme danger” (1.9.6; trans. Jones and Ormerod). Such assessments resonate strongly with the archaeological evidence presented above. Clearly, the inclusion of Thracians in the armies of Alexander and the Successors was crucial for the development of the Thracian military art.

28.7 Conclusion

This overview of evidence for the development of Thracian warfare during the first millennium clearly defines certain trends that were conditioned by proximity to and close contacts with Greece and Macedonia to the south and Scythia to the north. The emergence of the Odrysian kingdom influenced and channeled deliberate efforts on the part of the kings to develop this field further. The employment of eminent Greek military commanders and the establishment of emporia in the interior of southern Thrace from the fifth century contributed to the strong influence of the Greek way of war and perhaps to the Greek acquaintance with and adoption of Thracian tactics and forms of war, such as peltasts, that were suitable for the changing Classical polis.

The establishment of direct or indirect levels of Macedonian control in Thrace during the marches of Philip II and Alexander, as well as the reorganization of local settlements into strategic and economic powerhouses, encouraged the development of armor and warfare. The adoption of Hellenistic trends in poliorcetics is manifested in both military architecture and the implementation of artillery as a new and essential means of war. The existence of three early Hellenistic states on the territory of ancient Thrace – those of Lysimachus, the Odrysian kingdom in inland Thrace, and that of the Getae in northeast Thrace – and Lysimachus' conflicts with Seuthes III and Dromichaetes stimulated the diversification of weaponry and the development of local armies in the context of warfare in the Hellenistic koine. The use of large Thracian units in the armies of Alexander and the Successors were additional factors in the

development of the Thracian art of war and the recognition of Thracian warriors as mercenaries on demand.

Translated by V. Bineva

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Guide to Further Reading

Agre, Daniela. 2011. *The Tumulus of Golyamata Mogila near the Villages of Malomirovo and Zlatiniza*. Sofia: Avalon Publishing. Full presentation with superb documentation of a rich burial of a Thracian aristocrat from southeast Thrace dated to the third quarter of the fourth century; chapters III–IV present in detail the weapons and the horse trappings in the context of finds from Thrace and beyond.

Archibald, Zofia. 1998. *The Odrysian Kingdom of Thrace*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Presents defensive and offensive weapons in Thrace during the fifth century (244–252); analyzes grave complexes as markers of status and rank; presents defensive and offensive weapons in Thrace during the fourth and third centuries (252–258).

Best, Jan. 1969. *The Thracian Peltasts and Their Influence on Greek Warfare*. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff. A still useful, comprehensive study of the emergence and influence of peltasts on ancient war and the innovations introduced by Iphikrates.

Delemen, Inci. 2004. *Tekirdağ Naip Tümülüsü*. Istanbul: Ege Yaynları. Full publication of a tomb from the hinterland of Bisanthe accompanied by rich finds from the early Hellenistic period. The

weapons, as well as the entire complex, are analyzed and interpreted in the context of known finds from Thrace and the Aegean region. An abridged, English-language version of the study is available: Delemen, Inci. 2006. "An Unplundered Chamber Tomb on Ganos Mountain in Southeastern Thrace." *American Journal of Archaeology*, 110: 251–271.

Ogdenova-Marinova, Ljuba. 2000. "L'armure des Thraces." *Archaeologia Bulgarica*, 3: 11–24. A concise overview of Iron Age Thracian cuirasses; abounds with information combining literary sources and archaeological data known up to the time of publication.

Stoyanov, Totko et al. Forthcoming. *The Thracian City. Townplanning. Fortification System. Architecture. Sboryanovo 3, Part 1*. Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo "Sveti Kliment Okhridski." Excavation report on the results of a 25-year archaeological investigation of the largest town in northeastern Thrace, possibly identified with ancient Helis, the capital of the Getic ruler Dromichaetes; presents observations about fortifications and artillery in light of known examples from Thrace and the Hellenistic world.

Webber, Christopher. 2011. *The Gods of Battle. The Thracians at War 1500 BC–150 AD*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword. A comprehensive, English-language presentation of the development of Thracian weapons and warfare from the Late Bronze Age until the Roman period, with reference to recent discoveries from Bulgaria; there are occasional inaccuracies in the text and plates, however.

Notes

- 1 All ancient dates are BCE.
- 2 Only the spearhead is published, 37 cm in length, alongside similar finds from Dragoevo and Byala (Atanasov 1995, 58, no. 58). The sauroter is 28 cm long, with a ca. 23 cm tang.
- 3 Nineteen iron swords and elements of a bronze sword with iron rivets are known from Thrace.

Chapter 29

Religion

Kostadin Rabadjiev

29.1 Introduction

As Herodotus (5.3) notes, the Thracians were the most numerous people in the world next to the Indians and they would have been unconquerable, had they been politically united. Since political alliances were very short-lived in Thrace, though, one may doubt the existence of a unity of religious behavior in Thrace and so the very idea of “Thracian religion” provokes discussion. In traditional societies, a unity of ideas has been achieved in communities that have maintained close contact in cohabitation (settlements), in ethnic communities (tribes), or in political structures (states). While Herodotus describes the Thracians as similar in behavior (with the exception of the Getae, Trausi, and those who live above the Crestonians), they were probably quite different, as is clear in the case of their gods. The geographical scope of this study is the territory inhabited by Thracians, with an emphasis on regions south of the Danube and excluding the Thracian diaspora in Asia Minor. Several periods are distinguished in its chronology. The first recognizable traits appear in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age, but documented evidence of Greek observers and imported artifacts with images of gods are known since the fifth century,¹ probably as a result of the accommodation of Greek settlers in colonies (apoikiai) on the Thracian coast, but also in emporia in the interior. These developments also coincide with the rise of the Odrysian kingdom and suggest a perceptible process of Hellenization of its elite; after the campaign of Philip II in 341, such a trend is clearly recognizable. The last period begins in the first century, continues with the organization of Thrace as Roman provinces, and ends with the imposition of Christianity as an official religion.

This chapter discusses the essential elements of religious life: the Thracian pantheon; priests as mediators in communication with gods; and the rituals they performed at sacred times and in sacred space. This chapter will also consider funeral cult, the post-mortem rise in status of outstanding members of the Thracian elite, and their worship in a form of heroic cult, perhaps identical with royal cult, as mediators with the divine world.

29.2 Pantheon and Priests

One may infer a well-developed idea of the divine omnipresence of Thracian gods, if it is possible to trust the story about King Cotys, who chose “places shaded with trees and watered by flowing streams” for his symposia where he feasted and sacrificed to gods (Athen. 12.531e). The Thracian gods were anthropomorphic in appearance, if Xenophanes knew any specific facts in his speculations about mortals who imagined that their gods resembled themselves – thus the gods of the Thracians had light blue eyes and red hair (fr. 21 B16 Diels-Kranz). The dwelling of these gods may have been thought to be in the heavens, if we trust Polyaeus’ curious story about Cosingas, the chieftain of Cebrenii and Sycaeboae, who was also the priest of a goddess identified by the author with Hera (7.22): when the Thracians ceased to obey him, he gathered a number of long ladders to climb up to heaven, in order to inform the goddess of their disobedience; the naïve Thracians were terrified by this, and they promised with an oath to obey all of his future commands.

Although there is a lack of any evidence about personified divine activity from the earliest period, an ithyphallic figure of a warrior in front of a “solar boat” is depicted on a stone slab from Razlog dated to the Late Bronze Age; painted or incised circle decoration on contemporary ceramics and artifacts may also refer to a solar cult (Bonev 2003, 42–43, 77–78). Herodotus claims that the Thracians only worshiped Ares, Dionysus, and Artemis, while their kings “worship Hermes above all gods and swear only by him, claiming him for their ancestor” (5.7). Can Herodotus be trusted? The gods do not have Thracian names, but it is hard to believe that there was such an advanced Hellenization of Thracian religion in the fifth century. It is more likely that Herodotus, as was usual for the historian, “translated” local, non-Greek divinities with the names of their Greek counterparts for his Greek readers; the Thracian names of these gods were probably unknown to him or thought unnecessary in his short review. From his ethno-psychological portrait of the Thracian elite, we learn that the “idler was most honored” and that war alone was a prestigious job, while agricultural labor was the most condemned (Hdt. 5.6–7). So the usual activities of Thracian aristocracy can be associated with some of these divinities, such as, for example, feasting with wine (Dionysus), war (Ares), and hunting (Artemis). In a separate passage, Herodotus mentioned sacrifice to Artemis Basileia by Thracian and Paeonian women (4.33). Other Thracian gods reported by Herodotus are more problematic, like Zalmoxis, whom the Getae worshiped, possibly an anthropodaimon (4.94–96; and see below), and Pleystor, who received human sacrifices from the Apsinthians (9.119). Thracian gods known from other sources, outside of Herodotus, include: Bendis, probably Bithynian in origin, whose cult was officially established by the Athenian state in 430/429 (Popov 2010, 66–90); Kandaon, the strange god of the Crestonians mentioned by Lycophron at 2.937–938; and Cotytto, the goddess attributed to the Edonians by Aeschylus (fr. 57 Radt). This religious diversity suggests both the tribal nature of cult in Thrace and the absence of a common Thracian pantheon and ideology, the

latter a result of short-termed unions and states in the region, although some researchers believe that various deities were local variations of the shared supreme god and Mother-Goddess (Popov 2010, 55–212). These tribes inhabited coastal areas of Thrace, which were known to Hellenic colonists and explorers and were an early contact zone in the exchange of ideas.

Information about the interior of Thrace comes from epigraphic evidence as early as the fourth century. Dionysus, already mentioned by Herodotus, may have been the guarantor of an oath in a mid-fourth-century regulation in which a successor of Cotys confirmed the rights of *emporitai* in Pistiros (Archibald 1999, 437). The treaty with foreigners in Thrace explains his presence, but not the absence of a divine Thracian protector in it, unless such a name was present in a part of the inscription that has been damaged. From approximately the same time, there is inscribed on jug no. 112 from the Rogozen treasure a sacred formula presenting Cotys as a child or a slave of Apollo (Kotys Apollonos pais) (Mihailov 1989, 56–57; SEG 37.618). Apollo and Dionysus were both popular in early Hellenistic Thrace, as were some new divinities in Thrace that appeared as a result of Greek influence. From the so-called “Seuthopolis inscription” we learn about the cults of Phosphoros and Apollo in Kabyle and those of the Theoi Megaloi² and Dionysus in Seuthopolis (IGBulg 3.2, 1731; Elvers 1994, 241–266); Phosphoros is mentioned in another inscription from Helis, the Getic capital of Dromichaetes (Chichikova 1990; SEG 56.825). These gods, and some others, are also known from Thracian royal coinages (see [Chapter 18](#)). The fifth-century coinage of Sparadokos featured a horseman on the obverse of tetradrachmas, a horse on the obverse of drachmas, and a horse protome on the obverse of the diobol. In addition to functioning as a distinct sign for different denominations, such images probably had ideological meaning, because this was a place reserved for the gods. On fourth-century royal issues, however, Greek gods appeared on the obverse and the image of the horseman was moved to the reverse: for example, Cybele with a mural crown occurs on the coins of Hebrizemos, while Dionysus with an ivy wreath figures on those of Ketriporos and Demeter on those of Kersobleptos. In the Hellenistic period, still more Greek gods appear on Thracian coinage. The bronze coinage of Seuthes III, for example, with the head of Zeus on the obverse and a horseman on the reverse, reflects the influence of the coinage of Philip II with both a young and an adult horseman; the latter on Thracian coins is identified with Seuthes himself, combined with his portrait on the obverse. This strong Macedonian influence in Thrace can be recognized even in symbols and signs, like a wreath and a star, on the coins of Seuthes, and in the presence of Artemis Phosphoros and Heracles on the coins of Spartokos, who, together with Apollo and Athena, are traditional on the later municipal coinage of Kabyle. Fifth-century coins were minted in Greek *apoikiai* and royal silver coinage was used especially for trade with Greek merchants. Such facts could explain the presence of images of Greek deities on fourth-century Thracian

coins, but not the absence of native deities, with the exception of the horseman (?).

Since the fifth century, Greek gods and myths appeared on decorated items, mostly tableware, imported to Thrace, like those on the Panagyurishte rhyta and amphora. Such stories may have been popular in Thracian society, like the judgment of Paris, the Dionysiac or Cabiric scene on the jug from Borovo treasure (Marazov 2011, 15–113), and even the local imitations of Heracles' myths on jug 154 from the Rogozen Treasure (Rabadjiev 1996, 64–72) and on a silver plaque from a burial mound near Panagyurishte (Rabadjiev 1994, 89–102). Such evidence complements literary testimony about Greek singers praising Sparta and Thebes at the wedding of Cotys' daughter to Iphicrates (Athen., Deip. 4.131a): the display of such knowledge was a sign of the Thracian elite's affiliation to Greek culture.

Evidence from the Hellenistic period, however, complicates simple narratives of the Hellenization of Thracian religion. For example, there appear indigenous scenes, including goddesses and riders, on functional artifacts, mainly tableware, military gear, and horse trappings. Such figures are present on the rhyton from Poroina, where there is depicted on both sides of the vessel a scene of a seated woman with rhyton and phiale in her hands in a recognizable gesture of libation, flanked by a facing priestess or adorant (Marazov 1978, 60–62). Goddesses are shown on the jugs from the Rogozen treasure, again in a symmetrical composition in chariots driven by priestesses (no. 157): one carries a blooming twig and phiale, perhaps symbolizing the giving of life, the other with bow and arrow, possibly indicating the taking of life (Rabadjiev 2014, 36–40). On jug no. 155, a goddess, again doubled in a symmetrical composition, is seated on a lion and holds a bow and arrow (Marazov 1992, 131–144). We can trace the borrowings from Greek imagery, but the question is what did they represent. Do they reflect common religious ideas such as the Hyperborean deities (Venedikov 1989)? Are they simply Thracian imitations of Greek gods (*interpretatio graeca*) or, more likely, were these images used to present Thracian ideas (*interpretatio thracica*)? Among the latter alternatives, the first assumes the universality of Greek culture, while the second is predicated on the uniqueness of Thracian culture. An answer may be reached through a discussion of two defined trends in Thracian culture: one Thracian, the other Hellenized.

Consider the example of Dionysus, the most popular deity in Thrace, whose Greek origin today is beyond doubt. His presence in Thrace could be seen as an attempt to place him in a wild space befitting a god of nature, whose thiasos was a strange collection of marginal characters and his orgiastic frenzy in the wild has its political connotation for Thrace in Greek drama. But some aspects of Dionysus in Thrace, like his association with solar cult, the popularity of his cult among the Thracian elite, and his image on royal coins may suggest that a native Thracian god similar to Greek Dionysus was

assimilated to him. A priestess of Dionysus uttered prophecy in the oracular shrine of the Bessi and Alexander Polyhistor reports that Sol and Liber were worshiped there as one god called Sabazius by the Thracians (FGrHist 273 F 103; Macrobi., Sat. 1.18.11). Such evidence helps to explain the different nature of the Thracian god and illustrates the Greek tendency to interpret unusual features of the “barbarian” world in Greek terms.

Recently this Thracian Dionysus has received an Orphic interpretation (Fol 1986) or has been explained as parallel to the Cabiri of mystery cult (Marazov 2011). Thracian Orphism was reconstructed as an elite oral doctrine preaching the principles of the Universe, namely, the harmony between the chthonic, represented by Zagreus, and the solar, represented by Orpheus, in cosmogonic cycles that were created in the intercourse between Mother-Goddess and her solar son, identified on a political level with the king; its proposed date is from the middle of second millennium to the ninth/eighth century. The doctrine is parallel to the Delphian reform, where Dionysus appears in the winter, when Apollo is thought to be absent. The Cabiric interpretation is discussed as an Aegean tradition, reconstructed in mythic and ritual context as Thracian elite ideology. But the assumption of such Thracian doctrines as common in illiterate, politically fragmented communities is strained, and the literary and material evidence to hand concerning religion in Thrace is filled with discrepancies. The different Thracian tribes seem rather to have been influenced variously by the Greeks in their religious behavior and thus one must confront the possibility that there was no common Thracian pantheon.

Apart from the curious tale about Cosingas, the chieftain and priest of the Thracian Cebrenii and Sycaeboae (Polyaen. 7.22), we know Vologaesús, the priest of Bessian Dionysus, who was the leader of a rebellion against the Romans in 15 (Cass. Dio 54.34), and also about Zalmoxis of the Getae, who was appointed a priest of their god before being declared a god himself; at the time of Burebista, this office was held by Decaeneus (Strabo 7.3.5). Such evidence indicates the high social status of priests and may even be suggestive of the priestly functions of the king as inherited from a king-priest in the legendary past; compare, for example, the sacred formula discussed above, which identifies Cotys, possibly a Thracian king, as the son or slave of Apollo (Popov 2010, 216–239). These sacred prerogatives of kings, however, could not abolish the role of priests in tribal cults. Figured scenes like the Rogozen jug and the Poroina rhyton suggest the presence of priestesses at least, who attend goddesses. In early third-century Seuthopolis, Amaistas, son of Medistas, dedicated an altar upon completion of his term as priest of Dionysus (IGBulg 3.2, 1732); while the dedicator’s name may suggest a relationship with the Odrysian royal dynasty, the dedication may also indicate that the term of the priesthood was fixed and would be held by another in succession, as was common in Greek cities.

Roman domination changed much in the organization of religious life. There

appeared official Roman cults and new gods, among them some of the most popular in the Empire, including Eastern and Egyptian cults. Such changes also affected the status of priests, now arranged in the hierarchical system of imperial administration and as city magistrates in provincial government and in municipalities. The Roman cults were related to the official propaganda of imperial power, including the Capitoline triad of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno Regina, and Minerva Augusta, as well as Dea Roma and the figure of ruling emperor. Such cults were popular within the Roman army, among Italian settlers with a role in administration, and with merchants and priests, mostly in the frontier provinces of Moesia Superior and Inferior (for the borders of which, see [Chapter 8](#)). The focus of emperor worship and religious propaganda was in the administrative centers: *augustales* are attested in inscriptions from Ratiaria, Oescus and Novae, while *pontifices* are known from Ratiaria, Oescus, and Troesmis (Lungarova 2012, 55–59); and the delegates in the provincial assembly (*concilium*) in Tomis/Troesmis elected each year a *sacerdos provinciae* to perform the Imperial cult (Lungarova 2012, 59).

Official cults were less popular in the senatorial province of Thracia, where even the Capitoline triad was nearly absent, except for the Greek Zeus and Hera (Gočeva 1984). The Imperial cult was organized by the Thracian *koinon* in Philippopolis³ and was performed by an *archiereus*, the chief priest of the city's principal cult; in Philippopolis he was the priest of Apollo Kendrisos, known since Trajan's time, and probably the emperor was honored in his temple (Raycheva 2013). At the time of Elagabalus, Philippopolis received the honorary title of *neokoria*, with the associated duties taken up by the *thracarch*; individuals holding this office have characteristically Thracian names (Gočeva 1985). The *archiereus* in Augusta Traiana dedicated a statue of Marcus Aurelius from his own funds, and he performed his priestly duties together with his wife (Gočeva 2007).

The Roman cults were distributed mainly in the frontier provinces (Moesia Superior and Inferior), which had a military presence and were under the jurisdiction of the emperor. These were the cults of Genii, Diana and Apollo, Hercules, Mercury, Ceres, Liber Pater, Proserpina, Pluto, and Silvanus; single dedications to Victoria, Concordia, and Nemesis are known; nearly all of them were placed in temples and sanctuaries in the urban centers and military headquarters along the Danube frontier (*limes*) and the western part of Moesia Inferior (Lungarova 2012). Their popularity was due mainly to the army, which also privileged the official cults, the cult of Standards, and those of patron deities such as Mars, Hercules, Fortuna, Victoria, and Bonus Eventus. Most popular of all, however, was the local equestrian deity, particularly among soldiers of Thracian origin, who were usually the lowest in terms of military status and rarely appealed to the foreign gods. The group of *principales* took a more active part in Roman cults, while individual

dedications to the Thracian horseman were offered by centuriones; the senior officers were primarily engaged in the official cults and that of the ruling emperor (Alexandrov 2010).

Greek gods were popular mainly in the province of Thracia. Zeus and Hera, together or separately, were honored mainly in locations in the western part of the province, like Serdica, Pautalia, and in sanctuaries along the Strymon valley (Gočeva 2000a, 2000b, 2006), where the sanctuary of Jupiter Svelsurdos in the territory of the Denteleti was mentioned by Cicero in his accusation of Piso (Pis. 85). The Thracian epithet may suggest an old local deity later identified as or assimilated with Zeus; he is known during the Roman period in dedications from Thracian lands and has the iconography of Zeus Keraunios, with thunderbolt, eagle, and a snake at his legs (Popov 2010, 172–183). Apollo was popular in Thracia as the main god in Augusta Traiana and in Philippopolis, where he had the Thracian epithet Kendrisos. Asclepius, often with Hygeia, was popular in the western part of the province, with important cults in Pautalia and Serdica (Gočeva 2000a). Dionysus was known everywhere in Thrace, with numerous priests, mostly of Thracian origin (as indicated by their personal names) and often at the head of religious associations. Artemis, Hermes, and Heracles were also present in religious life, but mostly in urban centers; single monuments are known from rural and remote sanctuaries. Priests with Thracian names are known from the cults of Asclepius at Batkun, of Heracles in Pautalia, and of Apollo in Augusta Traiana. Gods were honored with Thracian epithets, perhaps suggesting a connection with pre-Roman times. Key questions remain, however: since urban continuity is attested only in Philippopolis and urbanization did not begin until the second century CE, were these Greek cults practiced as they had been in the urban, ethnically diverse centers of the Hellenistic period? If so, how can such continuity of practice be explained in the context of relative discontinuity of settlement?

The Egyptian cults of Sarapis and Isis, as well as those of Cybele and Attis, and Hypsistos from Asia Minor, fill out this picture of religious life. Each was known already in Hellenistic Thrace, but not beyond the Greek apoikiai; in Roman times, single dedications and religious artifacts appear in administrative centers, mostly offered by Greek and eastern settlers (Tacheva-Hitova 1983). The Syrian god Jupiter Dolichenus was extremely popular among soldiers of eastern origin in Moesia Inferior, where he even displaced the Roman cult of Jupiter (Najdenova 1989a). Mithras appeared for the first time in the military camps of Moesia, later in Thracia, but his devotees usually had Greek, Roman, or eastern names, rarely Thracian (Najdenova 1989b). Thracians are noticeably absent from these foreign cults, with the exception of Phrygian Sabazius, a point that may imply a more ancient root of religious syncretism; even his priest in Serdica had a Thracian name (Gočeva 2006).

29.3 Ritual Space and Practice

Ritual communication with supernatural beings was performed by ancient man in his living space, with domestic cult taking place in his house, and communal cult in sanctuaries. Although use of these sacred spaces is known since early prehistory and was different from other types of daily activity, it is still difficult to define the religious functions of such spaces in Thracian society (Domaradzki 1994). Several types can be identified, based on their spatial positioning: intramural and extramural, the latter further subdivided into mountain and lowland locations. One may also distinguish between sanctuaries that attracted local participants and those which gathered worshipers from large areas. A third typological indicator is the character of the religious practices and the rituals that took place within sanctuaries, as can be reconstructed from archaeological evidence. In general, Thracian cults seem to have been aniconic, since images are known after the fifth century on utilitarian artifacts but not in sanctuaries.

Among the earliest mentioned sanctuaries is that of Bendis in Athens, situated in Piraeus on Munychia Hill, where the Thracian goddess was celebrated by two distinct groups of participants – one of Athenian orgeones, the other of Thracians – in a night feast with torchlight races on horseback (Plato, *Rep.* 327a–328a). Intramural temples and shrines are known from Hellenistic Thrace. For example, the “Seuthopolis inscription” mentions a Phosphorion in Kabyle and an altar (bomos) of Apollo in the agora there, in addition to a Samothrakeion in Seuthopolis and an altar of Dionysus in his shrine (hieron) in the agora. The shrine of Samothracian Theoi Megaloi was probably located in the fortified quarter of Seuthopolis, in a complex of several rooms with a common portico and hearths in two of them (Dimitrov and Chichikova 1978).⁴ In another inscription from Batkun a sanctuary of Apollo is mentioned as a place where the citizens dedicated a stele (telamon) in honor of a prominent, unnamed individual, who is often regarded as a Thracian ruler, and his brothers (IGBulg 3.1, 1114). These examples of temples and shrines in an urban environment under strong Hellenic influence are suggestive of Greek religious cults. Kabyle was among the towns conquered by Philip II, where he settled inhabitants and installed a garrison, while the Great Gods were worshiped in Seuthopolis as a result of an agreement between Seuthes III and Lysimachus after a war when the construction of the city was started (Rabadjiev 2002, 10–54). The citizens mentioned in Batkun were probably from Philippopolis or nearby Pistiros, suggesting again Hellenic influence.

Other known sanctuaries were at a remove from the activities of daily life, some of them on heights above 1600–1800 m in the wild area of mountains and lit by the sun. These are identifiable as rock sanctuaries, since there is a wide range of cuttings on exposed bedrock suggestive of ritual use as chutes, pools, niches, steps, and altars: prominent examples includes the sanctuaries

at Babyak, Tatul, and Perperek. Cult sites of this type can also be found on elevations in lowlands, near settlements, or even within them, as at Levunovo, Nebet Tepe (Philippolis), and Kabyle. The holy precinct usually was enclosed by a peribolos and spatial separation of activities has been recognized in the temenos at Babyak, with different areas reserved for the presentation of gifts and for the burning of sacrifices on clay altars and hearths (Tonkova and Gotsev 2008). A great difficulty concerns the attempt to identify the deities worshipped in such sites. The oracle of Dionysus, located in high mountains where the Satrae dwelled, the Bessi were priests, and a priestess uttered prophesies as at Delphi, may have been housed in such a sanctuary (Hdt. 7.111). According to Alexander Polyhistor, the Thracian god was worshipped in a circular temple on top of the hill Zelmisos (FGrHist 273 F 103; Macrobi., Sat. 1.18.11). It is not known whether this shrine can be identified with the sacred grove of Liber in Thrace mentioned by Suetonius, where the father of Augustus consulted barbarian gods for his son and the priests predicted world domination, visible in the high fire that flared on the altar from the libation with wine, just as happened to Alexander on that same altar (Aug. 94). The oracle has yet to be conclusively linked with a known archaeological site.

Sanctuaries in plains were close to habitations and probably in agricultural land. Such sites are known from archaeological research alone, since they remained outside the interests of Greek observers and were not associated with any epigraphic practice. While some originated in the Early Bronze Age with sustained activity even down to Roman times, as at Bagachina, most sites of this type began to be used during the fourth century. The established practice consisted of the disposal of a wide range of objects and materials, possibly gifts for the gods, mostly in pits. Such sites can be described as “pit sanctuaries,” since they cannot be linked to any economic activity (see [Chapter 11](#)). The objects found therein can be described as ritual (e.g., models, clay figurines, amulets) and domestic (e.g., utensils, ornaments, clothes, tools, weapons) in function, but fragments of wall plaster and domestic hearths have also been recovered, as well as portions of the sacrificial meal, sometimes whole animals, and even human sacrifices (Tonkova 2010). These finds may be interpreted as donations to the gods in an actual exchange of values between human and divine worlds: worshipers give in order to obtain or to acknowledge what has been done with the assistance of the god. The pattern of burned sacrifice for the heavenly gods implies their omnipresence, but the deposition of sacrificial food in pits suggests that the recipients were to be subterranean gods, heroes, and the dead. Pits are known in cemetery areas, in and under burial mounds, probably intended as food for the dead (tomb cult), but also part of a ritual for the deified mortals (heroic cult). As for the human victims, literary sources mention such sacrifice in Thrace: Pleystor received human sacrifices (Hdt. 9.119) and Diegylis, chief of the Thracian Caeni, sacrificed two young Greeks in 145, explaining that kings and ordinary people could not use the same victims (Diod. 33.14).

Religious activities are also documented in early Hellenistic domestic space, as in the case of the ornamented clay hearths (*escharae*) known mostly in urban environments like Seuthopolis, Philippopolis, Kabyle, Pistiros, and Helis. The attempt to link them with domestic cult (Makiewicz 1987) is not justified, since at Seuthopolis they were found in a separate and representative room not in the *oikos*, where the hearth was located. Their decorated surface, with traces of repairs after use, probably did not involve burning sacrificial food, but, as reported for certain Thracians (Solin. 10.5), incense or hallucinogens. Also associated with hearths were stone and clay “andirons” with protomes of horses or rams, arranged in pairs on both sides of the fire, some of which were small in size and thus portable, and surely ritual in function (Gerasimov 1972). Attempts to identify them as Celtic in origin, as T. Gerasimov proposed, are ineffective because they are found in environments with no Celtic artifacts; rather, they seem to represent the continuation of a Thracian tradition from the Early Iron Age. These andirons were present in domestic space in villages outside urban centers, but some were known from burial places; hearths are found in a similar range of environments. The ram was a domesticated animal, but the aristocratic horses probably implied in popular belief the idea of a solar chariot with heavenly fire and its purifying power.

The notable change in ritual activity after the Roman conquest was the use of images and written dedications to the gods, like altars, stone reliefs and statues, and bronze statuettes. Temples for Roman cults were built in the newly founded urban centers of Moesia. The Capitolium in Oescus, a complex of three separate temples with an altar to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, was built as a monumental expression of these changes at the end of Trajan’s rule (Ivanov and Ivanov 1998, 92–151). A large sanctuary of Diana and Apollo, worshiped in Roman manner, has been excavated at the military camp of Montana (Ogdenova-Marinova et al. 1987, 14–53); a sanctuary of Asclepius and Hygia is attested in the inner courtyard of the *valetudinarium* at the camp of Legio Italica I in Novae (Alexandrov 2010, 112–115). Most official dedications of altars in Roman cults were concentrated close to military camps and urban centers (Lungarova 2012). A similar pattern existed in Thracia with temples for Greek and Eastern cults in the towns, where the presence of foreign settlers – obvious in the religious life of settlements like Nicopolis ad Istrum (Gočeva 1984) – mainly from eastern provinces, is attested. Philippopolis was the residence of the Thracian *koinon* and the Imperial cult was celebrated with Pythian games since the time of Commodus, renamed later as Alexandrian by Caracalla, and Kendrisian at the time of Elagabalus; in Augusta Traiana the emperor was celebrated with gladiatorial games as evidenced by the mention of his priest *archiereus di’hoplon* (Gočeva 1985, 2007; Raycheva 2013).

The cult of the Thracian rider was practiced mainly in extramural sanctuaries.

Those in Moesia were situated far from towns and camps, mostly located in the foothills of the Balkan range and in the eastern parts of the province, where Romanization was not so robust. In Thracia the sanctuaries in plains were set on high ground for better visibility in the area, marked by natural rocks, springs, and rivers. With respect to the settlement network, there were small rural shrines available in the vicinity of villages, while more distant shrines were often focal cult centers between settlements; a separate group of mountain shrines was available only for festivals (Valchev 2011). These sanctuaries were different from the Greek in terms of their overall plan and layout, the absence of monumental altars (one is known in the sanctuary of Asclepius Keiladenos near Pernik), also in the use of temples as treasuries. The buildings too were simple and only in two cases did they resemble temple building of Greek type: a temple in antis near Pernik and a tetraprostyle near Kopilovtsi; a monumental divine image is known only at Kopilovtsi, Batkun, and Babyak (Valchev 2011). Complex constructions like theatres or stadiums, hospitals, and facilities for pilgrims were absent; such facts suggest that visitors were drawn from the rural population in the vicinity. In eastern Thrace, east of Philippopolis, where the cult of Apollo was dominant in urban centers, the equestrian deity was worshiped in a syncretic cult with him; in the west the syncretism was with Asclepius, rarely with Silvanus or Hephaestus in Moesia. Some other sanctuaries were dedicated to the Three Nymphs, close to thermal springs and bathing complexes, with the exception of the one at Burdapa, Pazardzhik district, which was rural in character. Only a small number of these sanctuaries, mainly in the Rhodope Mountains, reveal clear traces of pre-Roman use: most begin to be used from the second quarter of the second to the middle of the third century CE and continued in use until the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century CE, when the punishment by Theodosius and his sons put an end to pagan religious practices.

29.4 Beyond Death

The margin between death and immortality in Thracian thought leads to those of high social status – this we learn in the narrative of Herodotus about Salmoxis who preached to the first among his countrymen, his sympotai in the andron, “that neither he nor his guests nor any of their descendants should ever die, but that they should go to a place where they would live for ever and have all good things”; the truth of this idea would be proved by Salmoxis’ return from beyond after a three-year stay there (4.95). What the princes had by their right was available to the rest of the Thracians through brave death in battle or by lot once every five years, when they would send a messenger to Salmoxis, believing that he would not die but go to their only god (4.94). Herodotus himself was uncertain about a story that he knew from the Greeks who dwelled along the Hellespont and Pontus, namely, that Salmoxis was a man and a slave of Pythagoras, and not a local deity (daimon) of the Getae

(4.96). What the historian had refused to define, we find articulated by the author of the Classical drama about Rhesus, the Thracian king who would not descend to the underworld to be a shadow in the realm of death, but remained as an anthropodaimon in a cavern of silver-veined mountains ([Eur.] Rhes. 962–982). This description suggests something different from Greek heroization, which resulted in the preservation of the hero's human nature, but reinforced it with divinity, since Rhesus achieved immortality without any transition through death, rather like the one promised by Salmoxis. This Thracian idea about psychosomatic immortality is confirmed by Plato in his story about one of the Thracian physicians of Zalmoxis (who must be identical to Herodotus' Salmoxis), their king and god, who taught his principles that soul and body must be treated together, as they were an inseparable whole (Charm. 156e). The idea is similar to Pindar's description of Heracles as "hero-god" (Nem. 3.22: heros theos); this may explain Porphyry's note that Zalmoxis was worshiped by barbarians like Heracles (Vita Pythag. 14–15). Similar ideas can be traced in Greek religion: in Homeric epic, for example, Menelaus was promised bliss in the Elysian Fields and was transferred there before his death (Od. 4.561–569); Hesiod's account of the ages of man suggests that the race of heroes was transferred to the Islands of the Blessed without death, too (Op. 166–173). Croesus, as described by Bacchylides, was brought by Apollo to the land of the Hyperboreans from his pyre (3.58); and Achilles was transferred to the White Island in Pontos from his funeral pyre by his mother, as revealed in the seventh-century Aethiopis (Rohde 1925, 55–87). The story about Achilles was known to Pindar in Nemean 4, but for him corporeal immortality was obsolete; it had been replaced by ideas about the immortality of the soul and its reincarnation or metempsychosis, which provided an opportunity to achieve post-mortem bliss equal to that of the great heroes. While such ideas can be discussed in the Greek world in relationship with the development of the polis and the new role of the demos in religious life, in aristocratic Thrace ideas about psychosomatic immortality of the elite could be traced to the origin of the state at the end of sixth century and continued until the Roman conquest.

The Thracian elite was promised a post-mortem bliss, similar to their way of life, and psychosomatic immortality in places located on the periphery of the inhabited world (oikoumene), but not beyond, transferred there by the god. Thus, they were not dependent on the living, as the pale shadows of ordinary Greeks in the kingdom of Hades were, which may explain the proximity of the Greek polis to its necropoleis. The challenge is to identify reflections of these ideas about anthropodaimones in Thracian burials, especially tumuli with built in chamber-tombs, which, by virtue of their construction and decoration, clearly had elite and even royal functions, since they ensured an available space both for the abode of the deceased and for conducting rituals to contact him. Thus the tombs, although covered with mounds, were all built

on ancient ground level (or above it, in the case of reused embankments); such a location was probably a manifestation of the idea that those buried were not in the subterranean kingdom of dead, emphasized in some cases with magnificent stairs leading up into the tomb area. Most Iron Age burials were cremations, but in the chamber-tombs it is inhumation that is mostly attested. Perhaps reflecting the post-mortem activity envisaged for these deceased elites, mounds were at a distance from any habitation and the dead inside were laid on couches or beds (*klinai*), not dug into the floor, so that the interior was composed as a banquet scene, including tableware; the setting recalls the promise that Salmoxis gave to his followers.

Religious activity in the form of pits and hearths in the mound offers clear evidence for communication with the buried dead. Since there is no published data indicating the duration of such practices, however, a key question arises: did such practices constitute tomb cult performed within the three generation period of “actual memory” of the deceased or, rather, do they indicate the worship of heroes for many generations in epic memory (Antonaccio 1995)? Such features have been discovered in front of the tomb’s entrance and dated to a period of time when the tomb was still visible, before it had been covered completely. These rituals resemble the cults performed on the altars at the front doors of Greek temples and homes for deities and heroes (Burkert 1985, 87); here they take place in front of the tomb, which may be regarded as the residence of an *anthropodaimon*. But it is difficult to define such acts as “heroic cult,” and since these rituals were limited in time, they are perhaps best described as a form of “rites of passage,” which aimed to achieve a new status for the deceased, that of an *anthropodaimon*, and to make manifest his psychosomatic activity in this very world. Such an interpretation is supported also both by the tomb’s entrance, which could be an exit, too, and provided communication between the two worlds through a *dromos* or open area leading towards an otherwise inaccessible interior, and by the dead body laid in the funeral chamber and his horse laid in the antechamber or in front of the entrance (Rabadjev 2002, 92–111). The frequent presence of a horse within the burial complex must now be interpreted: it is likely that the horse was killed to attend his master, rather than offered as a sacrifice, since they were both treated in the same manner, either buried or cremated. The image of the horseman, prevalent on luxury items and in elite contexts, such as coins, signet rings, tableware, weapons, horse trappings, and drawings in tombs, can thus be explained as an image of the elite’s ancestor, divine protector, and *anthropodaimon*. The deification of a king after his death raises a question about royal cult. While we are told about his divine origin (Hermes as a progenitor) and can reconstruct scenes of his investiture or a hierogamy, such acts were within the scope of his royal power and could not be evidence for recognized divine status during his lifetime.

The suggested idea is a convention, because most of the tombs were

Hellenistic in date and not built before the second half of the fourth century; earlier dolmens and rock tombs were similar in idea as seen in their plans, but are known only in southeast Thrace, the early Odrysian territory. There is also reason to doubt the Orphic interpretation of Rhesus and Zalmoxis, for, the idea of the anthropodaimon implied a unity of soul and body preserved after death, even post-mortem activity in the same world, while the Orphic concept opposed the immortal soul to its body, which was regarded as the prison occupied by the soul until released through death (Rabadjiev 2002, 125–165).

Some Hellenistic burials suggest an attempt to personalize the burial place with a visible inscription or portrait; this practice represents a new cultural trend based on literacy, which displaced the old epic tradition, and gradually transformed psychosomatic immortality into “heroization” of the dead and his immortal soul. Such a process can be traced down into Roman times, when monumental burials lost their aristocratic character and the horseman’s image vanished from luxuries, appearing instead on multiple stone reliefs as votives in sacred spaces, some of them anepigraphic dedications of ordinary Thracians. This image on votives and burial monuments occurred throughout the vast territory of the Thracian provinces and beyond them, distributed in a way that resembles a “national” cult (Kazarow 1938; Oppermann 2006). Among the inscribed monuments, however, it is possible to distinguish the presence of local deities, since most of the names were either regional, as in the case of, for example, Kendreisos from Philippopolis, Karabasmos from Odessos, and Saldenos from his shrine at Glava Panega near Lovech; or functional, like Propylaios (“guardian of the gate”), Pyrmeroulas (concerned with the cultivation of wheat), and Aularkenos (the “home guardian”), among others (Gočeva 1992). Such dedications suggest that the figure had an anonymous identity, however, as they refer to the rider mainly as hero (heros), god (theos), sometimes as both hero and god, or master (kyrios).

The iconographic convention of the image could be regarded as generic and able to be identified with different Greek gods by the presence of an inscription (Dimitrova 2002), but the lack of any specific identification supports instead the notion of a deified ancestor. Such an interpretation is further strengthened by the imagery of these votive reliefs, which appears to borrow from Hellenistic heroic cults and monuments, in which a tree marks the burial place as sacred and the serpent serves as its guardian, while a raised altar may suggest a ritual to achieve the hero’s epiphany as a horseman. The iconography is schematic and three types of scene are common (Kazarow 1938), although some simple narratives could be read (Boteva 2011). There is the solemn scene of epiphany, in which in front of the rider usually stands a goddess or goddesses, an altar, or a tree with snake (type A); on Attic reliefs a goddess or worshipers were presented performing a libation, and in Thrace this scene is used to depict local goddesses (Stoyanov 1985). Then there are scenes presenting the rider as hunter (type B) or his return from hunting (type

C), a popular motif of ancient funeral monuments for expressing the afterlife bliss of heroes. It is often difficult to distinguish clearly between funerary and votive reliefs, and the dead on gravestones were often identified as heros athanatos (“immortal hero”), as in the case of the son of Dinis (IGBulg 2, 796). Any discussion of the nature of the horseman as a hero or god is based on the definite Greek concept of the divine world, which is clearly inapplicable to the Thracian religious model, where mortals after death were to become divine ancestors or anthropodaimones.

The history of Thracian religion as described above clearly illustrates a heterogeneous society, dependent on the political aspirations of its elite and ambitions to adapt foreign ideas and practices, even to adopt fashions; such trends are particularly evident in the influence of Greek colonization in Thrace, the Macedonian conquest, and the establishment of the Thracian provinces in the Roman Empire. This is just the official tendency, however, especially predominant in urban centers with their ethnic diversity. Different priorities are displayed in more conservative, rural communities, where ritual practice tends toward the stable behavior of traditional cult. In both settings, communication was directed primarily toward the beyond, namely: the divine ancestors of the elite, the anthropodaimones in their splendid complexes that can be understood as tombs, homes, and shrines; and the heroized mortals, who functioned as local heroes in rural communities and could be addressed in prayers for help and protection in simple rituals, without need of priestly mediation.

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Guide to Further Reading

Scholarly interest in Thracian religion began with the study of the Classical world and interest in the ancient Greek interpretation of the exotic practices of their northern neighbors. The first attempts to reveal the acquired knowledge with the specificity of Thracian culture were offered by Gavril Kazarov (1936) and Ianko Todorov (1928), the latter with emphasis on the pagan cults of Moesia Inferior. Literary sources and archaeology provided the background for Thracian interpretations of religion. Thus Alexander Fol constructed the theory of Thracian Orphism (1986) in an attempt to explain the different Thracian world. A monograph on the Thracian pantheon has recently appeared (Popov 2010). Ivan Marazov (2011) has attempted to explain Thracian religion through comparison with the mysteries of the Cabiri. But the Thracian interpretation as a model is based on uniqueness of tradition and fails to examine changes in Thracian society through the Macedonian and Roman conquest, just as the ancient Greek interpretation has failed to explain a culture different from their own Classical kosmos (Rabadjiev 2002). Roman provincial and Thracian religion is much more clear, due mainly to the rich range of available sources: votives, inscriptions, and other artifacts. The principal scholar is Zlatozara Gočeva with her studies on the regulation of urban cults and sanctuaries (1976, 1984a, 1984b, 1985, 1992, 2000a, 2000b, 2006, 2007). The Eastern cults were thoroughly discussed by Margarita Tacheva-Hitova (1983) and Vărbinka Najdenova (1989a, b). Many of the

popular cults were studied in PhD theses, most still unpublished: Apollo (Gočeva 1976), Artemis (Stoyanov 1986), Heracles (Rabadjiev 1992), Asclepius (Doncheva 2000), the Three Nymphs (Karadimitrova 1990), Roman cults (Lungarova 2012), Roman military cults (Alexandrov 2010), Hermes/Mercury (Draganov 2011), extra-urban sanctuaries (Valchev 2011), Emperor's cult (Raycheva 2013). Such studies provide a good foundation for research, unfettered by the extremities of Greek or Thracian interpretation.

Notes

- 1 Unless otherwise noted, all dates are BCE.
- 2 The cult of *Theoi Samothrakes* in Seuthopolis could hardly be explained as a Thracian tradition, but it rather implies the influence of Lysimachus in the religious life of the Hellenistic city (Rabadjiev 2002, 10–54).
- 3 On koina in Roman Thrace, see Burrell 2004, 243–245.
- 4 I interpret the fortified complex at Seuthopolis, often described as *basileia*, as a sanctuary of the Great Gods (Rabadjiev 2002, 10–26).

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